

A D E F E N C E  
OF THE *Memo. 13.*  
FIRST HEAD of the CHARGE  
OF THE  
C O M M I T T E E  
OF THE  
Lower House of CONVOCATION

Against the Right Reverend the  
*Lord Bishop of Bangor.*

B E I N G  
R E M A R K S upon some P O S I T I O N S  
of his LORDSHIP, contained in his SERMON,  
in his A N S W E R to Dr. S N A P E, and to the  
R E P R E S E N T A T I O N .

Wherein is shewn, that his Lordship *hath* denied,  
and *doth still* deny, *all* Authority to the Church.

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By H E N R Y S T E B B I N G, M. A. *K*  
*Rector of RICKINGHALL in SUFFOLK,*  
*and late Fellow of St. CATHARINES-HALL*  
*in C A M B R I D G E .*

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*The Second Edition.*

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ADVICE  
OF THE  
First Head of the CHARGE  
OF THE  
COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
Lower House of Convocation  
Against the Right Reverend the  
Lord Bishop of Bangor.

Remarks upon the  
of the Lord Bishop of Bangor  
to the House of Convocation  
and to the

Which is shown to the Lordship and dated  
and was read by Authority to the House

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Rector of St. Andrew's Church, London.  
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Volume 2



## The P R E F A C E.

**T**HE following Sheets are intended as an Acknowledgment of my Share in that common Debt which lies upon all true Friends to our present Establishment, to the Lower House of Convocation, for their seasonable Endeavours to secure it against that violent Attack which has lately been made upon it by the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Bangor. The Point I have undertaken is that of Church Authority only, and in this I have concerned my self very little farther than was necessary to shew the Sense of his Lordship and of the Committee thereupon. As this is all that was necessary to be done in order to the true stating of the Question between his Lordship and that learned Body, so I hope that what I have said may be sufficient to give a Check to those favourable Sentiments which have been taken up by too many on the side of the former, to the manifest Hurt and Prejudice of the latter.

The Reader will easily perceive by this, that I am now writing a Defence, not of Church Authority, but of the Censure of the Committee, and consequently he will not expect

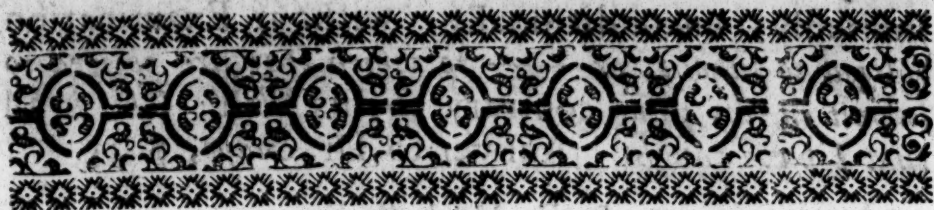
## The PREFACE.

*to find me attempting at anything but to shew that his Lordship is guilty of the Fact laid to his Charge. The Method wherein I have chosen to manage this Debate, is that which I conceive will be allowed on all hands to be the most, and indeed the only proper Method conceivable, viz. by comparing that Censure with his Lordship's Declarations, both in his Sermon, and in the Defence of it. And tho' I cannot flatter my self so far as to think that I have done this unexceptionably, yet I will venture to say, that, if I know my own Heart, I have done it impartially.*

*I have no more to add, but to acquaint my Reader that I have made no Remarks upon his Lordship's Notion of a Church, nor upon what he hath said with regard to the Succession of the Ministry in one continued Line down from the Apostles, nor was it necessary that I should. For in all Disputes about the Authority of the Church, a Church is supposed to be, and Ministers regularly constituted; and consequently these two Points, as they were only accidentally mentioned by the Committee, so they are in themselves altogether out of the Question.*

R E-





REMARKS  
UPON SOME  
POSITIONS  
OF THE  
BISHOP of BANGOR  
In relation to  
*CHURCH Authority.*

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CHAP. I.

*Of the Authority of the Church in general.*

Bishop of Bangor.

**I** Have denied no Authority to the Church, but absolute Authority, i. e. an Authority to the Sentence of which Inferiors are indispensably obliged to submit. And therefore if in the Christian Church there be an Authority in Superiors, properly so called, which is not absolute, and an Obligation in Inferiors to submit to meer Human Authority, which is not indispensable; I am, notwithstanding any thing I have said, as much at liberty to declare for it as themselves. Answer to the Representation, Chap. I. Sect. 5. p. 24, 25. Christ — hath delegated no — Authority to Men,



*Men, to which Christians are absolutely, i. e. — un-  
limitedly, unconditionally, without Examination  
obliged to submit, or — to which they are obliged to  
submit in any thing contrary to his Will. This is all  
that I have taught. Answer to Dr. Snape, p. 35.*

R E M A R K.

Had it been evident from his *Sermon* that his Lordship had denied to the Church *no Authority*, but an *absolute, unlimited, unconditional Authority*, or an Authority to the Sentence of which *Inferiors* are *indispensably* obliged to submit; as he justly could not, so I humbly conceive he would not have been censured by the *Committee* upon this Head. For,

1. It is certain that there neither is nor can be in *Men*, and therefore not in the Church, any *absolute, unlimited, or unconditional Authority*. For all Authority which either is or can be exercised by *Men*, is and must be *limited* by this Condition, viz. that nothing be enjoined or commanded by them, which to comply with is *contrary to the Will of God*. And upon this Account no *Human Authority*, i. e. no Authority exercised by *Men*, can oblige *indispensably*: For seeing no *Man* has Authority to oblige another to do any thing contrary to God's Will, it is manifest that every one has a Right to *examine* into all Human Injunctions, and to be determined by *his own Judgment* whether they be agreeable to God's Will or not; because if I am to be determined not by *my own Judgment*, but by the Judgment of *others*, whether what they enjoin be agreeable to God's Will or not, I must then obey those Persons in *whatever* they command, i. e. the Authority of such Persons will be *absolute*. Admitting therefore that what is commanded me by *Men* be in it self agreeable to God's Will, yet seeing I am to be determined herein by *my own Judgment*, and not by the Judgment of *others*, if upon the strictest Examination it appears to me to be contrary to God's Will,

Will, my Obedience shall be *dispensed with*, i. e. I am not to obey; which seeing it is equally true of *all Human Injunctions* whatsoever, it follows therefore that *no Human Authority* obliges *indispensably*.

2. The Committee themselves do not claim to the Church any such *absolute, unlimited, indispensable Authority*. His Lordship I know seems to be of another Opinion, and the Instance by which he has (a) endeavoured to support his Judgment, I must confess, is such as I am not able readily to account for. It is in short this: His Lordship had declared in his *Preservative*, that (b) the thing which justified the Protestants in separating from the Papists, was their being persuaded in their own Consciences that their (the Papists) *Doctrines and Worship* were corrupt. From whence he infers, that if this were duly and impartially considered, it would be impossible for Men to unchristian, unchurch, or declare out of God's Favour any of their Fellow Creatures, upon any lesser, or indeed any other Motive than wicked Dishonesty and Insincerity, of which God alone is Judge. Hereupon the Committee observe, that (c) if it be true that there is but one Consideration, viz. that of wicked Dishonesty, which will justify unchristianing, unchurching, or declaring out of God's Favour, and of that one Consideration God alone is Judge, there is evidently an End of all Church Authority to oblige any to external Communion, and of all Power that one Man, in what Station soever, can have over another in Matters of Religion. From this Passage it seems evident, 1. That the Committee do suppose a Power in the Church to oblige others to external Communion. 2. It is expressly affirmed that the Church cannot have such a Power, if no Consideration but wicked Dishonesty and Insincerity will justify unchristianing, unchurching, and declaring out of God's Favour such as will

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(a) See Answ. to the Represent. Chap. 1. Sect. 22, (b) p. 85.  
(c) Represent. p. 9. Fol. Edit.



not comply with her Injunctions. Therefore, 3. It is implied that the Church (in their Opinion) *has* such an Authority as *will justify her* in unchristianing, unchurching, and declaring such Persons out of God's Favour upon *some other Consideration besides* wicked *Dishonesty* and *Insincerity*, i. e. tho' they be *honest* and *sincere*. Now if this be true, it seems pretty manifest that the Church must have an *absolute* Authority. For the Church cannot be *justified* in *declaring* any out of God's Favour, but those who *actually are* out of God's Favour; by consequence if the Church has such an Authority as will justify her in declaring those out of God's Favour who refuse to comply with her Injunctions, even tho' they be sincerely persuaded in their own Consciences that what she enjoins is contrary to God's Will, then the refusal of such Persons to comply, notwithstanding they were thus persuaded, must have cast them out of God's Favour. Which is as much as to say, that a Man's being sincerely persuaded that what the Church enjoins is contrary to God's Will, is no Bar against her Authority, it will not excuse him in not complying with those Injunctions, or in other Words, that the Authority of the Church is *absolute, unconditional, and indispensably obligatory*.

Whether the learned Members of the Committee did see these Consequences, or will now own them to be justly drawn, they themselves alone must determine. In the mean time I shall beg Leave to do them one Piece of Justice, which is certainly due to all Writers, *viz.* to gather their Meaning not from one single Passage, but from the whole of what they say compared together, and by explaining the obscure by others that are more plain and easy. If we may take the Opinion of the Reverend the Dean of *Chichester* (which I think we very safely may, notwithstanding any thing his Lordship has been pleased to alledge to the contrary) as the Opinion of the whole



whole *Committee*, we have the most express Declarations that possibly can be, that they do not claim to the Church an *absolute, unlimited Authority*. (d) *Absolute, unlimited Authority*, says he, *there is none either Civil or Ecclesiastical*. And upon his Lordship's declaring in his *Letter to Dr. Snape*, that he intended in his *Answer to the Representation* to argue against *absolute Authority*: The *Dean* tells him in effect, that his denying *absolute Authority* was not the thing which the *Committee* found fault with, and that therefore all he could say upon that Head would be nothing to the Purpose: But I need not insist upon this; the *Committee* have themselves plainly enough told us, that they claim to the Church *no absolute unlimited Authority*. (e) *This Right Reverend Bishop*, say they, *in his extream Opposition to certain unwarrantable Pretensions to extravagant Degrees of Church Power, seems to have been so far transported beyond his Temper and Argument, as—*I will proceed no further: For these Words do manifestly show, that in the Opinion of the *Committee* there are *Degrees of Church Power* which are *extravagant*; and which to pretend to is therefore *unwarrantable*. But could the *Committee* have said this, if they had thought the Authority of the Church to be *absolute, and unlimited*? It is manifest they could not; for an *absolute Authority* is the *highest Authority* that possibly can be conceiv'd; and therefore upon Supposition that the Church has *such an Authority*, *no Degrees of Church Power* can be *extravagant*; nor any *Pretensions to any Degrees of Church Power unwarrantable*.

Indeed had the *Committee* expressed themselves with less Clearness upon this Subject than they really have, I should never have imagined that they had any thing to say against his Lordship for denying that

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(d) *Answ. to a Letter*, p. 54.

(e) *Represent.* p. 14.

the Church has an *absolute* Authority; because this is, and ever was as constantly and strenuously denied by *all Protestants*, as the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*. This I mention to silence, if it be possible, the Clamours of those Men who are every Day alarming us with the Apprehensions that our *English Clergy* (those of them I mean, who discover that Zeal which all of them ought to have for the established Church) are grasping again at that *absolute* Dominion which their Forefathers shook off with the Yoke of *Popery*, and would fain have it believed, that his Lordship's opposing these Encroachments was the main Reason of his being censured by the *Committee*. This Scandal is as senseless as it is wicked and malicious. Can the Clergy be aiming at that which they every one of them constantly and unanimously condemn? Or could the *Committee* censure his Lordship for opposing that which they themselves have opposed, and do oppose as heartily as he? No; they tell us plainly enough what the Ground of their Censure was, *viz.* That it was not because he had denied to the Church an *absolute* Authority, but *ALL* Authority; because he had laid down such *Doctrines and Positions as tend to subvert ALL Government and Discipline in the Church of Christ, and to reduce his Kingdom to a State of Anarchy and Confusion*. Now if this be the Case, the Censure of the *Committee* is certainly just. Doctrines and Positions of such a Tendency as this, can never be withstood with too much Zeal, especially when they come from the Mouth of a *Bishop* of the Church, *i. e.* of one to whom the *Care and Government* of the Church is committed: Nor will it avail to alledge, that his Lordship now declares that he denies *no* Authority to the Church but an *absolute* Authority. If this can satisfy any that his Lordship is Orthodox, it will not prove that the *Committee* had not a just Reason to esteem him otherwise. The Question before  
the



the Committee, when they drew up their *Representation*, was, I conceive, not what Authority his Lordship would afterwards think fit to deny to the Church, but what he *had then actually* denied her. They had then no other way to judge of his Opinions, but by his *then present* Writings; and of these Writings they were to judge, by the same Rule by which all other Writings are or ought to be judged of, *viz.* By interpreting the several Positions contained therein, according to the most plain, obvious, and natural Sense of the Words wherein they are expressed. The Question therefore is, whether in those Writings, there are not several Passages in which, according to this Rule of Interpretation, his Lordship has denied *ALL* Authority to the Church; and this I shall now endeavour to determine, confining my self wholly to such as are to be met with in his Lordship's *Sermon*.

The only Passage that is there to be found in relation to Church Authority in general, is at p. 11. where are these Words. *Christ has in these Points, (i. e. in the Affairs of Conscience and eternal Salvation) left behind him no visible Human Authority, i. e. (for so his Lordship must be understood) no Authority to be visibly exercised by Men.* Now 'tis certain that if the Church has any Authority at all, it must in this Sense be a *visible Human Authority*; and consequently his Lordship hath here denied to the Church *all Authority in the Affairs of Conscience and Salvation*.

This his Lordship (as indeed it was necessary he should) has expressly (g) owned, and yet declares with respect to this very Passage, that he has denied *no* Authority to the Church but *absolute* Authority, or an Authority to the *Sentence* of which *Inferiors* are

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(g) Answ. to the Represent. Chap. 1. Sect. 5.



indispensably obliged to submit. But is saying that the Church has *no Authority in the Affairs of Conscience and Salvation*, no more than saying that the Church hath *no absolute Authority*? Cannot the Church have Authority in the Affairs of Conscience, unless *Inferiors* be indispensably obliged to submit to her Sentence. Why, so it seems to his Lordship; for he tells us that *an Authority in those Points can be no less than an Authority to determine other Men's Consciences, and to determine either the Terms or the Certainty of their Salvation*. What does his Lordship mean by an Authority to determine the Consciences of other Men? Not, I hope, an Authority (or rather Power) to know or understand other Men's Consciences; for this is impossible, and therefore needs not be disputed against. I think then he must mean an Authority to bind other Men's Consciences: But how? *Universally, unlimitedly, indispensably, in every thing which is enjoined*? Why this must be said to make the Assertion at all pertinent; but then for the Truth of it we have nothing at all to depend upon but his Lordship's bare Word, which tho' it may be sufficient in any Matter of Fact, will not, I suppose, be allowed to pass for an Argument: But whatever be the Meaning of these Words (which whether I have hit upon or not, I am not certain) those which follow are exceedingly plain. Every one understands what it is to determine the Terms and Certainty of Men's Salvation, and will as readily apprehend that whatever Authority can do either, must indeed be absolute: But I must intreat his Lordship's Pardon, if I cannot agree with him, that such a Power is necessarily implied under the Notion of having Authority in Affairs of Conscience. He may interpret those Words after this manner, or after any other he thinks fit; but the thing to be considered here, is, not what his Lordship's Notions of Authority in these Cases are (of which Notions we know nothing from any Passage in

in his *Sermon*) but what the Generality of Men will most readily understand when they hear it affirmed, that *the Church hath no Authority in the Affairs of Conscience?* Affairs of Conscience, Affairs of Salvation, Affairs of Religion, I take to be Phrases of the same Signification, and every one knows that his Lordship uses them as such. Now by such Affairs as these I must confess I always understood, and I believe most Men do understand in general, *all Affairs* wherein their *Consciences*, their *Religion*, and consequently their *Salvation*, are or may be any way concerned. In this Sense almost every thing about which the Actions of Men are conversant is an *Affair of Conscience*, because as these Actions are either *well* or *ill* applyed, so the *State* of their *Consciences*, and their *Religion* will be either *better* or *worse*, and their *Salvation* which depends thereupon either *more* or *less* secure. To deny therefore in this Sense that the Church hath any *Authority in the Affairs of Conscience*, is to deny that the Church hath Authority to do any *Act* which shall at all concern or affect Men's *Consciences*, so as at all to alter the *Rule* of their *Consciences*, which in plain Terms is to deny that she hath any Authority at all.

I know very well that his Lordship sometimes speaks of Affairs relating *purely* to Conscience, and perhaps it may be thought but just to understand Affairs of Conscience, wherever they are mentioned, under this Limitation. For my Part I am very willing to do his Lordship this Justice; but how it will in the least help him I cannot perceive. This is indeed limiting the Authority denied to certain Points, but then it is limiting it to those Points with respect to which either the Church must have Authority, or she must be *wholly without* Authority: For what are Affairs relating *purely* to Conscience? Why, in common Speech they are such Affairs as no way concern a Man consider'd only in his *Political* or *Civil* Capacity.



capacity. Affairs with respect to which a Man may act either this way or that way, and yet be never the better or the worse Member of Human Society. Now 'tis manifest, I think, that if the Church has no Authority with respect to *such Affairs as these*, she is absolutely without any Authority: For an Authority with respect to *Political or Civil Affairs*, considered as such, his Lordship denies her, and very justly, because 'tis an Authority she cannot pretend to.

To show you that the natural and proper Notion of Affairs of Conscience, or of Affairs relating purely to Conscience, is as I have now explained it; I must observe that his Lordship with all his Skill has not been able to bring that Phrase to any other Sense, without exposing his own Conduct in such a Manner, as I am perswaded the very worst of his Enemies, and those who have the meanest Opinion of his Abilities, could never have thought of. My Meaning will quickly be understood, when once you come to have learned what his Lordship's Definition of *Affairs relating purely to Conscience* is, which he has given us in these Words (b) *Affairs relating purely to Conscience, as I conceived then, and do still conceive, are properly speaking (not open Acts against Men's own Consciences, which were never so called by any Writer in the World, but) Affairs transacted between them and their own Consciences, by the Direction of their own Consciences, and of which no Man CAN judge without knowing their Consciences.* Whether any Writer in the World ever called those Acts, Affairs relating purely to Conscience, which his Lordship says ought not so to be called, I shall not stay to inquire: But it may, I think, very reasonably be demanded of his Lordship, what *Writer in the World* ever defined *Affairs relating purely to Conscience* in the Manner where-

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(b) Ibid. Chap. I. Sect. 9. p. 50.



in he has defined them, especially when those Affairs are spoken of as the *subject Matter of Human Authority*? As I take it, the Dispute is wholly about the Signification of a Phrase, which seeing it must be determined by common Use, it had here been very proper for his Lordship to have produced his Vouchers. But Authors of this sort I suppose were not ready at Hand, or the Places not easy to be found, and therefore to save himself the Labour of searching, his Lordship has given it us upon his own Word and Credit, that *Affairs relating purely to Conscience*, are such Affairs as, and no other than those which he has now been describing to us. Well then; we have his Lordship's special Warrant for it, that what he meant by saying that Christ *hath left behind him no visible Human Authority in the Affairs of Conscience*, or in *Affairs relating purely to Conscience*, was, That Christ *hath left behind him no visible Human Authority in Affairs transacted between Men and their own Consciences*, of which (i. e. of which Affairs) *no Man CAN judge*, &c.! And now pray Reader what think you? Has not his Lordship had a most weighty Work upon his Hands? He has with much Pains and great Subtilty been arguing from the *Prerogative of Christ*, and the *Spiritual Nature of his Kingdom*—What? Why, that the Church hath no Authority in those Affairs wherein it is *in the very Nature of the thing impossible that she should have any Authority*! I say impossible; for 'tis notorious that *Affairs transacted between Men and their own Consciences*, neither are nor can be the *subject Matter of Human Authority*, either in the Church or any where else. Take any particular Instance of Authority, and the Case will be clear: For do you mean by Authority a Power of *making Laws*? It is manifest that the *subject Matter of these Laws* must be something relating to the *External Actions of Men*, and not any thing which *passes in the Heart*, which no Body knows any thing

thing of but themselves. Or do you mean by Authority a Power of judging, and punishing others? Here again the *Subject Matter* of Authority must be Men's *outward Conduct*, and not their *inward*, which no Man can judge of besides themselves. This then must be the Substance of his Lordship's Reasoning, *viz.* That *because* Christ is King in his own Kingdom, *therefore* no Man *has* Authority in those Affairs in which no Man *can* have Authority; and particularly, no Man *has* Authority to *make* Laws in those Affairs about which no Man *can* make Laws; or to judge in those Affairs about which no Man *can* judge! His Lordship has owned this to be his Meaning with respect to the Case of judging, in express Terms. (i) *An Authority or Right to judge, censure, and punish in these Cases, (i. e. in the Affairs of Conscience) I reserve to Christ, and deny to all Christians of what Rank soever, because it is an Authority — which no Men CAN have; an Authority to judge in Points, in which no one CAN judge who does not know the Hearts of Men. A very substantial Reason without Doubt! But was this the Reason assigned by his Lordship in his Sermon, to show that no Man has Authority to judge in those Cases? No, he tells us himself, and every one knows it to be true, that this was there argued (k) by way of Inference from the Prerogative of Christ. And who then would not have thought that this Authority was something which Men might indeed possibly take upon them to exercise, but could not lawfully do it, because it would be an Usurpation of Christ's Prerogative!*

But that you may have a clear and thorough View of his Lordship's Reasoning, according to this Notion of Affairs of Conscience, I shall give it you drawn forth in its full Length. Thus then his Lord-

(i) Ibid.

(k) Ibid. p. 46.



ship begins, *Serm. p. 11.* " As the Church of Christ is  
 " the Kingdom of Christ, he himself is King; and in  
 " this it is implied that he is himself the Sole Lawgiver  
 " to his Subjects, and himself the Sole Judge of their  
 " Behaviour in the Affairs of Conscience and eternal  
 " Salvation " (i. e. *in those Affairs in which it is in the*  
*very Nature of the thing impossible, that any one besides*  
*himself should be either Lawgiver or Judge*) " And in  
 " this Sense therefore his Kingdom is not of this World,  
 " that he hath in those Points " (i. e. *in those Points*  
*wherein it is impossible he should have left any visible Hu-*  
*man Authority, any Vicegerents, or Judges,)* " left  
 " behind him no visible Human Authority, no Vicege-  
 " rents who can be said properly to supply his Place—  
 " No Judges over the Consciences or Religion of his  
 " People. For if this were so, that any such Absolute  
 " Vicegerent Authority—were " (*what is impossible*)  
 " lodged in any Men upon Earth; the Consequence  
 " would be, that what still retains the Name of the  
 " Church of Christ, would not be the Kingdom of  
 " Christ, but the Kingdom of those Men vested with  
 " such Authority. For whosoever hath such an Au-  
 " thority " (*as it is impossible for him to have*) " of  
 " making Laws, is so far a King " &c. Again p. 15.  
 " If therefore the Church of Christ be the Kingdom  
 " of Christ, it is essential to it that Christ himself be  
 " the Sole Lawgiver, and Sole Judge of his Subjects  
 " in all Points relating to the Favour or Displeasure  
 " of Almighty God " (i. e. *in all Points wherein he alone*  
*can possibly be Lawgiver or Judge*) " And that—no  
 " one of his Subjects any more than another, hath Au-  
 " thority to make new Laws—or to judge, censure,  
 " or punish the Servants of another Master in Matters  
 " relating purely to Conscience or Salvation " (i. e. *in*  
*Matters wherein it is impossible that they should have a y*  
*Authority either to make new Laws, or to judge, censure,*

or punish others) “ If any Person hath any other No-  
 “ tion—let him but ask himself, whether the Church  
 “ of Christ be the Kingdom of Christ or not? And if  
 “ it be, whether this Notion of it doth not abso-  
 “ lutely exclude all other Legislators and Judges in  
 “ Matters relating to Conscience or the Favour of  
 “ God? (i. e. in Matters wherein it is absolutely ne-  
 “ cessary that all other Persons should be excluded from be-  
 “ ing Legislators and Judges.) “ or whether it can be  
 “ his Kingdom, if any mortal Men have such a Power  
 “ of Legislation and Judgment in it, as it is in the Na-  
 “ ture of the thing impossible that they should have? Thus  
 stands his Lordship’s Reasoning according to his own  
 Explication of his Meaning! What some of his Friends  
 may think of it, I cannot tell. But for my part had  
 any one before hand offered me such a Comment upon  
 his Lordship’s Words, I have such a Regard to his  
 Episcopal Character, that I should have resented the  
 Usage, and have wished his Lordship either a more  
 judicious, or a more sincere Advocate.

His Lordship will tell me perhaps, as he has told  
 Dr. Sherlock in a like Case; that it is not (1) so exceed-  
 ingly absurd to argue against Impossibilities, because  
 there are many things which Men do not see or know to be  
 impossible, which yet are really so: But I must beg of  
 his Lordship to name me that single Man, Protestant  
 or Papist, High-Church or Low-Church, Juror or Non-  
 juror, who has ever believed that it was possible for  
 one Man to judge of what passes in the Heart of an-  
 other, or that Affairs of Conscience (as he has been  
 pleased to explain them) can be the Subject-Matter of  
 Human Authority. If there be any such senseless Crea-  
 tures upon Earth, his Lordship shall be allowed to  
 confute them, if he can think it worth his while. But  
 then I shall never allow (so long as I have any Measure  
 of Common Sense left) that it is any thing else but an

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(1) Ibid. Chap. 2. Sect. 7. p. 150.



Absurdity to go about to do it in the manner wherein  
 his Lordship has chosen to do it. Suppose that some  
 Body or other should have a Fancy to maintain that  
*Brutes* have Authority in *Affairs of State*; would his  
 Lordship think it a proper way of answering such a  
 Person, instead of telling him plainly that the thing  
 is absolutely impossible, to harangue him about the  
*King's Prerogative*, and the *Nature of Civil Govern-*  
*ment*? If he could, he may also think it proper to  
 argue in the other Case from the *Prerogative of Christ*,  
 and the *Nature of his Kingdom*, and not else: For the  
 one is certainly as reasonable a way of proceeding as  
 the other.

You see by this time how hard his Lordship was put  
 to it, so to fix his Notion of *Affairs of Conscience*, as to  
 make it implied that whoever has Authority in those  
 Affairs, must have an Authority to *determine either*  
*the Terms or the Certainty of Men's Salvation*. I have  
 stayed the longer upon this Head, because what has  
 here been said will be of further Use, and spare me  
 some Repetitions when I come to consider the several  
 Particular Branches of Church Authority. And now  
 when all is done, supposing that the Phrase *Affairs of*  
*Conscience* could consistently be brought to that Sense  
 which his Lordship would fain put upon it, yet even  
 this will not do his Business. For his Lordship has  
 denied to the Church all Authority, not only in the  
*Affairs of Conscience*, but in the *Affairs of Salvation*, in  
*Matters relating to the Favour or Displeasure of Almighty*  
*God*, and in *Matters of Religion*. His Lordship I hope  
 will not contradict me in this; but if he should, I must  
 then ask him whether he used all these Phrases as e-  
 quivalent or not? If he did *not*, why then did he not  
 distinguish them? If he *did*, it is manifest, that by deny-  
 ing to the Church all Authority in *Matters of Conscience*,  
 he has also denied that she has any Authority in those  
*other Affairs* too. But did ever any Writer in the  
 World, or do Men in common Speech confine Matters  
*relating to the Favour of God, Matters of Salvation, or*  
 Matters

Matters of Religion, to such Matters *only* as are *transacted between them and their own Consciences*? His Lordship may maintain the Affirmative if he pleases, and he may perswade those whom he can perswade. But certainly those who have any Knowledge of the Use and Signification of Words, and any Sense of what is decent and ingenuous, as they must know that these Phrases are *not* so limited, so they must think that it would have been more becoming a Christian Bishop (if he does indeed believe that the Church has any Authority) instead of seeking Sanctuary under such Subterfuges as these, to have recanted his rash Assertion, and have said plainly what ought to be said, because it cannot be denied that *it is not to be defended*.

But I must not pass over the other Reason alledged by his Lordship, to show that these Words, *Christ hath in those Points left behind him no visible Human Authority*, cannot be understood as denying *all* Authority to the Church; which is, that they are (m) *further explained without Stop or Delay by adding* "No Vicegerents who can be said properly to supply his Place." That these Words do follow the other *without Stop or Delay*, I grant. But that they are an *Explication* of them in his Lordship's Sense, *i. e.* so as to make it evident that he did not thereby intend to deny *all* Authority to the Church, I do by no means perceive. For

1. According to all the Common Rules of speaking, his Lordship has, even in this latter Sentence, denied *all* Authority to the Church, as evidently as he has done it in the former. For a *Vicegerent* (as the very sound of the Word imports) is one who supplies the Place, or acts in the Stead of another. And he supplies anothers Place, who does *in any Case* supply anothers Place, *i. e.* who is *in any Case* empower'd by another to act for him. If therefore Christ has left behind him *no Vicegerents* to supply his Place, then he has left be-

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(m) Ibid. Chap. 1. Sect. 5. p. 23, 24.



hind him *none* who are *in any Case* empowered to act for him, or in other Words, the Church is without *any* Authority. Or thus; *So far* as any one acts by an Authority delegated to him from Christ, *so far* he acts *in Christ's Stead*, or *so far* he is *Christ's Vicegerent*. Therefore to say that Christ has *no Vicegerents*, is to say that there are *none* to whom Christ has *in any Case* delegated an Authority to act for him, which again is to say, that the Church has *no* Authority. To what purpose his Lordship should insert the Word *properly* in this Sentence, I was not able to perceive, by any thing that I could find in his *Sermon*. That it makes no Alteration, whether it be put in or left out, is manifest, because every thing which *is*, must be *properly* what *it is*; and therefore if Christ hath *properly* no Vicegerents, he hath *no* Vicegerents. But by his Lordship's insinuating now in his *Answer*, that to say that Christ hath *properly* any Vicegerents on Earth, is a *Popish* Doctrine, I judge, that by a *proper* Vicegerent, he means an *Absolute* Vicegerent; so that in his Lordship's Opinion, it seems that no Man is or can be *at all* the *Vicegerent* of another, who is not *absolutely* so, *i. e.* who is not vested with that *full Power*, which is lodged in that other whose Vicegerent he is; and in this Sense it is true, that Christ hath *no* Vicegerent. But that his Lordship speaks here in a manner peculiar to himself, is plain, because this *Plenitude* of Power is never supposed in any of those Instances where this Word is commonly used. Thus *Kings* are said to be *God's Vicegerents*, and yet no one supposes that *Kings* are vested with that *full Power* or Authority which is *in God*. Again, *Ambassadors* are said to be *Kings Vicegerents*, but their Power is also *limited* to particular Cases. If his Lordship will still say that neither *Kings* nor *Ambassadors* are *Vicegerents*, tho' they be so called; I answer, that I must be contented to take my Mother Tongue as I find it, and so I think should his Lordship too, unless he will be pleased to Favour the World with

with a *Glossary* peculiarly adapted to his own Writings. But

2. Suppose that these *last* Words were capable of no other Sense, than that which his Lordship would now have us put upon them, how does it appear that the former are explained by them? *Christ* (says his Lordship) *hath left behind him no visible Human Authority, no Vicegerents who can be said properly to supply his Place, no Interpreters upon whom his Subjects are absolutely to depend, no Judges over the Consciences or Religion of his People.* These are all of them independent Sentences; nor has his Lordship by his manner of expressing himself, given us the least Hint or Intimation, that he intended any of them as an *Explanation* of what went before. Admitting therefore that by *proper* Vicegerents nothing else could be meant but *absolute* Vicegerents, it will then be true indeed that his Lordship hath in this Sentence denied no Authority but *absolute* Authority. But what then? will it follow from hence, that he hath not denied *all* Authority in another? I think not; for it may be very consistently affirmed of the Church, if she has no Authority, that she has not an *absolute* Authority. The like may be said of all those Passages in his Lordship's *Sermon*, where he has declared only against *absolute* Authority: They will prove sufficiently that he denies *so much*; but they will never prove (against so many other Passages, where he has in as plain Terms as can be thought of, declared against *all* Authority) that he has denied *no more*. Upon what account indeed a Man who owns no Authority at all, should ever declare against Authority with any *Reserve* or *Limitation*, is a Question which I cannot resolve, without supposing a sort of Policy, and cautious Dealing, which I am very loath to suspect in a Christian, much less in a Bishop of the Church. Whether his Lordship has not given us too much Reason to suspect this of him, will be seen in going along. In the mean time, I conclude that his Lordship has in *general* Terms denied *all* Authority to the Church; and now whether he



he has not also denied it in every particular Instance of Authority, I shall proceed to examine

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## C H A P. II.

*Of the Authority of the Church to interpret Old Laws.*

Bishop of Bangor:

**I** Have spoken only against Interpreters, to whom Christians are absolutely obliged to submit; and no such Consequence can justly be fixed upon this, as if I had pleaded against all Interpretation of the Laws of Christ, or all Attempts towards it, as the Committee seem to have inferr'd. Answer to the Representation, Chap. i. Sect. 4. p. 20.

### R E M A R K.

Upon this Point his Lordship has always expressed himself with great Clearness. *Interpreters* are not so much as once spoken of throughout his whole *Sermon*, without expressly limiting their Authority by this Restriction. *Christ* (says he) *has left behind him*—no *Interpreters upon whom his Subjects are absolutely to depend*, p. 11. *If—any—absolute—Authority—for—interpreting Old Laws—were lodged in any Men upon Earth; the Consequence would be, that what still retains the Name of the Church of Christ, would not be the Kingdom of Christ*, p. 12. *Whoever hath an absolute Authority to interpret any written or spoken Law, it is he who is truly Lawgiver*, Ibid. *If an absolute Authority be once lodged with Men under the Notion of Interpreters, they then become Legislators*, p. 13. *If they have—Power of interpreting—Laws—in such a Sense that Christians shall be indispensably and absolutely obliged to obey—then the Kingdom in which they Rule, is not the Kingdom of Christ, but of themselves*, p. 15. *Again, no one—hath Authority—to impose a Sense upon the old Laws of Christ*, p. 16.

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These are all the Places in the *Sermon* where there is any mention made of *interpreting* the Laws of Christ. From whence we may plainly gather what that Authority is, which his Lordship has there denied to *Interpreters*, viz. That it is such an Authority as implies under it a Power of *imposing* any particular Sense upon Christ's Laws, or of *fixing* and *determining* their Meaning so as that *others* shall be bound to stand to their Interpretations. Now this is the very same thing with saying (as his Lordship now does) that there are no *Interpreters* to whom Christians are absolutely obliged to submit; and therefore if it be true that the *Committee* have censured him as pleading against all Interpretation of the Laws of Christ, i. e. (for so his Lordship seems to explain himself) against all Attempts or Endeavours towards interpreting them; it must be owned that their Censure as to this particular is very unjust.

But before I proceed to examine this Point, I must take notice, that tho' his Lordship has in his *Sermon* denied no Authority of *interpreting* but an absolute Authority; yet now in his *Answer* to the *Representation*, he has denied all Authority. For as to the *Apostles*, he says, that they (n) were so far from being absolute Interpreters, that they were not at all, in any proper Sense, Interpreters of Christ's Laws, nor did ever claim to themselves the Privilege of interpreting, as belonging to them in Distinction from the meanest Layman to whom they preached the Gospel. Now if it be true that the *Apostles* themselves had no Authority to interpret Christ's Laws, it is manifest that the Church after them can have none. I do not intend to dispute this Point with his Lordship; for whatever may be said as to the *Apostles* who were Persons assisted by a Divine infallible Spirit, I am, so far as relates to the Church in general, of his Lordship's Opinion, that she hath no Authority to interpret the Laws of Christ. The Church of England claims no

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(n) Ibid. Sect. 10. p. 54.



such Authority: The *Committee* have claimed none, and it is I think very certain that none can (in reason) be claimed by any Man or Number of Men whatsoever. A Power of fixing or determining the Sense and Meaning of Christ's Laws, so as that others shall be bound to stand by those Determinations, cannot be in any Man or Number of Men not directed by an infallible Spirit; because if such a Power were lodged in any fallible Man or Men, it would then be in the Power of *Man* to alter the Laws of Christ, as he or they should think fit. But an *Authority* to interpret the Laws of Christ, whether the Word *Absolute* be added or not, implies such a Power as this, because if I am not obliged to stand to the Interpretations of another, any farther than those Interpretations appear to me to be *just* and *reasonable*; 'tis plain that I am to be determined herein, *wholly* by *my own* Judgment, and not at all by *his*, which is in other Words to say, that he hath *no Authority*. His Lordship therefore, if he had pleased, might very well have spared his *Absolutely's* when speaking of *Interpreters*; and if he had thrown them in as plentifully upon some other Occasions, where they were more needful to be put in, we might possibly have well enough understood his Meaning. But as it is, I confess I do not see how his use of that Word can at all help to direct us to it. For he that can in one Instance make use of a Word which yet he means nothing at all by, may as well do it in any other.

I shall have Occasion to apply this Observation more particularly afterwards; and therefore, to proceed now to the Matter in Hand. Although the Church hath *no Authority* to interpret the Laws of Christ, yet she may and ought to *endeavour* to interpret them, *i. e.* The Governours of the Church are particularly empower'd by Christ to offer their Explications of the Sense and Meaning of his Laws to the People, who are diligently and humbly to attend upon their Instructions. I do not find that his Lordship hath any where denied this, and therefore as I said before, if the *Com-*

*mittee* have censured him as denying it, their Censure as to this Particular must be very unjust. But for my part, I cannot preceive that what his Lordship has said in relation to *Interpreters*, was made any part of the Charge against him, any farther than as it was supposed to affect the Sacred Writers. If we may believe the Reverend the *Dean of Chichester*, it certainly was not. (n) *The Representation*, says he, *has but once mentioned interpreting the Laws of Christ, and then only with regard to the Apostles.* His Lordship, I know, would fain perswade us that Dr. *Sherlock* did not understand the Design of the *Committee*, which those may believe who can. As to my self, I have so just an Opinion both of the Abilities and Conduct of that great Man, that I should sooner rely upon his Testimony concerning any Design that he himself was personally engaged in, than upon Five hundred Conjectures against it, tho' they were supported by much better Arguments than those by which his Lordship has endeavoured to support his. For let us but examine those reasons. He says first, That (o) *they (the Committee) have left in the first Passage which they censure, these Words, "No Interpreters upon whom Christ's Subjects are absolutely to depend"; and in the Second Passage these Words, "to impose a Sense upon the Old Laws";* which is very true. But if his Lordship would infer any thing from hence pertinent to the Matter we are upon, it should be, I think, that the *Committee* have charged him with pleading against (not all interpreting, or all Attempts towards interpreting, but against) an *Authority* in the Church to interpret the Laws of Christ. But even this cannot be inferred by any good Consequence, unless it be necessary to suppose that the *Committee* has censured his Lordship as denying every thing of the Church, (i. e. of the Church now in being) which he has denied of all Men universally in those Passages which they have

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(n) *Ans. to a Letter*, p. 54. (o) *Ibid. Sect. 4. p. 18.*



cited from his Sermon. But as this is by no means necessary to be supposed, so the learned and reverend Divine above mentioned, assures us that it actually was not their Design. (p) *The Representation*, says he, has produced out of his Lordship's Sermon some Passages, where the Doctrines which are conceived to subvert the Government of the Church, and those relating to absolute Authority are mixed together. The Committee fix their Charge upon the former, and——added to prevent Mistakes, short Observations of their own, which were intended to point to the thing they found fault with. His Lordship may if he pleases tell Dr. Sherlock that this is his own Invention, and that he knows nothing at all of the Matter. But I will presume to say once more, that 'tis neither fair nor just not to admit of Dr. Sherlock's Testimony in this Case. Besides we have no need of his Testimony, the thing is plain and speaks it self, whether he had said it or not. The Committee have in Fact added their own Observations upon the Passages which they have produced from his Lordship's Sermon. In these Observations they have also in Fact told us what it was they found fault with in those Passages. Who sees not then that the Sense of the Committee concerning his Lordship's Doctrines, ought in Reason and common Equity, to be gathered not from the Passages themselves, but from the Observations of the Committee upon them?

I would beg of his Lordship to consider what wretched Work must be made, if we will suppose that the Committee found even any Fault at all, with every thing which they have cited out of his Sermon. For to give an Instance. His Lordship has said in his Sermon, that *the Church is a Kingdom*, in which *Christ is King*; and those Words stand quoted in the first Passage produced in the *Representation*. Will his Lordship now argue from hence, that those Words

are censured by the Committee? Why then he must make the Committee affirm that *Christ is not King in the Church, i. e. in his own Kingdom.* But his Lordship saw the Injustice of fathering upon the Committee such an Absurdity as this, and therefore has in effect own'd that these Words were not set down with an Intention to find fault with them, but only as an *Introduction* to what followed afterwards. (q) *This, says he, I suppose is at least uncontestable to Christians.* I wish his Lordship had been determind to proceed every where with the like Impartiality, and then he would have spared one Complaint at least, which, were there any just Ground for it, would very highly reflect upon the Honour of the Committee. The Committee had cited his Lordship as affirming that *the Sanctions of Christ's Laws are not the Rewards of this World; not the Offices or Glories of this State; not the Pains of Prisons, Banishments, Fines, or any lesser and more moderate Penalties; nay, not the much lesser negative Discouragements that belong to Human Society.* Hereupon his Lordship breaks out with great Astonishment. (r) *Here indeed I confess my self at a loss what to say to Christians and Divines. For if this Matter of Fact, so evident in the Gospel, is not plain and unblameable in their Eyes, what can I think of, &c!* My Lord, I intreat your Patience for a Moment. The Answer which you are so much at a loss to find, is ready at hand. The Committee own the Fact, but they like not the Consequence which you are pleased to draw from that Fact. *Christ, say you, annexed no Worldly Sanctions to his Laws:* Very true; but what follows? why, that therefore it is unlawful for the Civil Magistrate to add Worldly Sanctions, i. e. to encourage Religion, and discourage the contrary by Temporal Methods. This, my Lord, is the Consequence which you would draw from that Piece of

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(q) Ibid. Sect. 5. p. 22. (r) Ibid. Chap. 2. Sect. 3. p. 132.



History, and it is this Consequence, and this only, for which you are censured by the Committee.

I have produced this only as another Instance, to shew how necessary it is that we have recourse to the *Observations* of the Committee, to find out their Sense of his Lordship's Assertions; and consequently that the *leaving in these Words*, "No Interpreters upon whom his (Christ's) Subjects are absolutely to depend, &c." is no Argument that they found *any Fault* with those Words, much less that they censure them as denying any thing, which they judged ought to be affirmed of *the Church in all Ages*. I do not say that the Committee have found *no fault* with these Words, for I shall presently shew the contrary; and in order to this, and to the clearing up of the whole Matter, I shall consider what the Committee have said in their *Observations* concerning *Interpreters*.

In the 3 first *Observations* every one knows there is not one Word about *Interpreters*, tho' there is about *judging, censuring, and punishing*. In the fourth the Committee say thus, *Whether these Passages exclude the Sacred Writers as well as others from making Decisions, and interpreting the Laws of Christ, your Lordship's will judge by a Passage p. 12.* "Nay, whoever hath an absolute Authority to interpret any written or spoken Laws, it is he who is truly the Lawgiver, &c." His Lordship thinks it (s) *evident, that in this Observation the Committee censure the Passages before produced as excluding others from interpreting (i. e. from all Attempts towards interpreting) the Laws of Christ*. But this is impossible. For 1<sup>st</sup>. The Passages before produced, and here referr'd back to by the Committee, do all of them evidently and notoriously, to the Eye and Understanding of every common Reader, relate only to *interpreting with Authority*; and therefore could not be censured by the Committee, as

denying to any *all interpreting*, or *all Attempts towards interpreting*, as his Lordship supposes. 2dly, The *interpreting* here mentioned, and which they suppose his Lordship has denied to the *Apostles as well as others*, is not *all interpreting*, but an *Authority to interpret*, as is evident from their own express Words at the end of the *Observation*. His Lordship, say they, *has left us only this Choice, either to deny their (the Apostles) AUTHORITY to interpret the Laws of Christ, or to charge them with setting up for themselves in Opposition to their Master*. 3dly, Dr. Sherlock expressly tells us, that the *interpreting* which the Committee have censured his Lordship as excluding the *Apostles* from, is *interpreting with Authority*. His Lordship, (t) says he, *would be glad to have the World about him think, that the whole Controversy is about Authority to interpret, and impose Laws absolutely—But here his Lordship fights without an Adversary—The Representation has but once mentioned the interpreting the Laws of Christ, and then only with respect to the Apostles of Christ, who upon his Lordship's Principles, are equally with others excluded this AUTHORITY of interpreting*. Had his Lordship therefore had a Mind to have argued at all pertinently, he should have said (as I have before observed) that the Committee had censured him as denying to others, as well as to the *Apostles*, an *Authority to interpret*. But Dr. Sherlock has assured him that they have no Controversy with him upon this Point, but with respect to the *Apostles only*. And it is certain, that the manner in which the Committee have here expressed themselves, does not in the least argue the contrary. For the Committee might very consistently with Propriety of Speech say, That his Lordship had excluded the *Apostles as well as others*, from an *Authority to interpret*, when yet the only thing they thought blameable, was, that he had ex-

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(t) Ibid. p. 54.



cluded the *Apostles*. If indeed the *Committee* had said what his Lordship has made them to say, the Case had been otherwise. For speaking of this very Place, he says of the *Committee*, that (u) *they seem to refer to it as a Point plain from the foregoing Passages, and one Subject of Complaint, that those Passages exclude others, if not the Apostles themselves, from interpreting the Laws of Christ*. It has been very frequently a *Subject of Complaint* with his Lordship, that his *Adversaries* have not thought fit to set down his Sense in *his own Words*, but in *theirs*, and then argued against him as they pleased. But I appeal even to his *Friends*, whether the most unfair *Adversary* that ever yet engaged with his Lordship, has ever given him a more just Occasion for such a Complaint, than he has now given the *Committee*. That which the *Committee* refer to, as a Point plain from the foregoing Passages, compared with the Passage they are going to cite, is, that his Lordship has excluded the *Apostles*, as well as others, from interpreting. That which his Lordship says they refer to as a Point plain, is, That he has excluded others, if not the *Apostles*, and thus he perpetually represents their Meaning. But do these two Sentences convey the same Ideas? Is it the same thing to say that the *Apostles* are excluded from interpreting as well as others, and to say that others are excluded from interpreting, if not the *Apostles*? It is notorious that it is not. For the former way of speaking supposes it plain that the *Apostles* and others are equally excluded; whereas the latter supposes it only plain that others are excluded, and expresses some Doubt whether the *Apostles* are excluded or not. Again; this latter way of speaking throws the whole Stress of the Charge upon this, that his Lordship had excluded others, and so makes the Observation of the *Committee*, which was intended solely to prove that he had excluded the *Apostles*, down-

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(u) Ibid, Sect. 3. p. 15.

right Nonsense. Whereas the *latter* fixes it *wholly* upon this, that he had excluded the *Apostles*, and (as I observed just now) leaves it altogether undetermined, whether they think that he *ought to be blamed* for excluding *others* or not.

The Truth of the Matter therefore is this. The *Committee* have not spoke one Word about *interpreting*, as signifying thereby an *Attempt towards* interpreting, but only about interpreting *with Authority*, and that no more than *once*. This *Authority* of interpreting they suppose that the *Apostles* had, and censure his Lordship as denying it *to them*, and to them *only*. This Case they had in view, (as well as the Case of the *Church* in general) when they produced those Passages out of his Lordship's *Sermon*, where he has denied to Men an *absolute Authority*, or (for it is all one) an *Authority to interpret*, but made no Remark upon those Words till they had Occasion to produce some others, in which, as they thought, the *Apostles* were more *directly* and *particularly* struck at. His Lordship therefore is strangely mistaken when he says, that if those Words, *no Interpreters upon whom Christ's Subjects are absolutely to depend*, &c. had been left out of the first two Passages produced by the *Committee*, (*w*) it would have explained their *Meaning* (according to Dr. Sherlock) the better, and consequently have done more justice to him. For in the first Place; since according to Dr. Sherlock, and as the Truth indeed is, it was the Design of the *Committee* not to charge his Lordship with denying to Men *all* interpreting, or *all Attempts towards* interpreting; their Meaning to all equitable Persons, is much better explained by letting these Words *stand*, than it would have been by leaving them out. For who can imagine that the *Committee* should be either so very ignorant, or so very careless, as to go about to found a Charge against his Lordship of

(\*) Ibid. Sect. 4. p. 18.



ing all Interpretation to Men, by producing Passages which do plainly and evidently relate only to interpreting *with Authority*? Had those Reverend Gentlemen been capable of so much Dishonesty, they would in such a Case have certainly had the Policy to have slipped those Passages, and argued from some general Expressions, rather than by *setting them down*, instantly to proclaim their own foul Dealing. So that their *leaving in* those Words is so far from being an Argument that the *Committee* intended any such Charge against his Lordship, as he says they did, that it proves that they neither *did* nor *could intend* it, and consequently his Lordship is *not just* even in his Complaints of *Injustice*. Now if in the next place it be considered, that the Design of the *Committee* was to charge and censure his Lordship as denying to the *Apostles* an *Authority* to interpret, there will be still a better reason why the Words before mentioned ought not to have been *left out*. For his Lordship, I presume, will not say, that the Meaning of the *Committee* would have been *better explained*, and *more Justice done to him* by *leaving out* those very Words, which contained, in their Opinion, the very Proposition they found fault with, and which they intended afterwards to censure.

Whether the *Apostles* had or had not any *Authority* to interpret the Laws of Christ, or whether it can justly be inferred from any Passage in his Lordship's *Sermon*, that they *had not* such an *Authority*, I shall leave to be disputed between his Lordship and the *Committee*. Manifest it is that the *Committee* have supposed such an *Authority* in the *Apostles*, and that his Lordship has *excluded* them from this *Authority*, and that this was the Fault, and the *only* Fault, which they have found with those Passages in his Lordship's *Sermon* which relate to *Interpreters*. Here is therefore in this Point (excepting only the Case of the *Apostles*) a perfect Agreement between his Lordship and the *Committee*. For as on the one hand the *Committee* have not pretended that the *Church now* has any *Authority*

thority to interpret the Laws of Christ, so as that others shall be bound to stand to her Interpretation: So on the other hand his Lordship will not deny, nor have the Committee censured him as denying, that the Governours of the Church ought, according to the best of their Abilities, to explain Christ's Laws to the People, and that the People are in Conscience bound particularly to attend upon their Instructions, and to receive them so far as they find them to be agreeable to the Will of Christ. There is no *Medium* between these two Methods; and therefore I agree with his Lordship, that he is (x) freed from the whole Charge of saying any thing but what ought to be said against the Authority of interpreting Scripture (so far I mean as it concerns the Church in all Ages) if it may properly be said that a Man is freed from the Charge of saying that, with which in Truth he was never charged.

### C H A P. III.

*Of the Authority of the Church to make new Laws.*

Bishop of Bangor.

**I**F by an Authority to act for him (Christ) you mean an absolute Authority to make new Laws—relating to the Eternal Salvation of Christians, and binding their Conscience absolutely, I do indeed maintain that he hath left no such absolute Authority in any Man or Men—But if you mean any thing else by an Authority to act for him, you know I have expressed no more against it than you. Answer to Dr. Snape, p. 20, 21. In the Case of imposed Terms of Communion, I have declared against nothing but the absolute indispensable Obligation of Christians to submit to them, right or wrong, without ex-

(x) *Ibid.* p. 20.



*examining whether they be agreeable to Christ's Will or not.* Ibid. p. 37. *If any one will infer—that I argue against all Right of appointed Time, Place, or Ceremonies, relating to religious Worship,—I answer, that I not only do not own such Consequences, but I really do not see them.* Ibid. p. 44.

## R E M A R K.

That Authority of *Legislation*, and that *only*, which his Lordship affirms in these Passages, that *Christ hath not left with any Man or Men*, you see is such an Authority of *imposing Laws*, as obliges Christians to submit to those Laws *absolutely*, or *without examining*, first of all, whether what is commanded thereby be *agreeable*, or *not agreeable*, to the *Will of Christ*, *i. e.* whether they contradict or do not contradict any Law or Precept contained in the Gospel. I have already observed under the first Head, that *such* an Authority neither is nor ever was claimed by *Protestants*, and that therefore this never was nor can be a Matter of Debate between his Lordship and his Adversaries, and particularly not between his Lordship and the *Committee*. What I have now to add is this: That the *Legislative Authority* claimed by the *Church of England*, is a *Right or Power of making Laws* in *indifferent Matters only*, *i. e.* in Matters left *undetermined by Christ*, or in Matters concerning which nothing is by him either *commanded* or *forbidden*. Of this sort is the *Time when*, the *Place where*, the *Manner how*, the publick Worship of God is to be performed, and some other Matters of the like nature. Concerning these things the Gospel, I say, has determined nothing *particularly*, and yet it is very expedient, and even necessary, that something should be determined for the Sake of that *Order and Decency*, which the Scripture recommends, and which Reason tells us ought to be preserved in every Christian Society.

Now this *Right of appointing Time, Place, and Ceremonies*, relating to religious Worship, his Lordship  
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declares in the last of the above cited Passages, that he *does not argue against*, i. e. I suppose that he does not *deny*. But *to whom* is it that he does not deny this Right? *To the Church?* Why so one might indeed reasonably suppose. But by the Manner of his Lordship's expressing himself, there seems to be more reason to conclude his Meaning to be, that he denies it not *to the Civil Magistrate*. If, says he, *any one WILL INFER FROM HENCE that I argue against all Right of appointing*. This Passage you see was added as a Caution, to prevent his Reader from drawing a wrong Inference from what he had been speaking of. And what was it that his Lordship had been speaking of? Why, he had for about four Pages before successively to this very place been arguing, that the *Civil Magistrate* has no Right to add *Temporal Sanctions* to the *Laws of Christ*. It must therefore be with respect to the *Civil Magistrate* that his Lordship affirms, that he *does not argue against a Right of appointing Time, Place, and Ceremonies, relating to religious Worship*, because else his Caution will be impertinent; for his Lordship could not suppose that from his saying that the *Civil Magistrate* has no Right to add *Temporal Sanctions* to the *Laws of Christ*, any one should be in danger of concluding that he had argued against a *Right in the Church to appoint Ceremonies*. And indeed those who consider how wonderfully complaisant his Lordship has of late been to the *Civil Magistrate* in some other Instances, will find it no hard Matter to believe that it is his Lordship's real Opinion, that whatever *Right* there is in *Men* to *appoint Ceremonies*, and other *indifferent Matters* in Religion, it is in the *Civil Magistrate*, and *not in the Church*. But I shall make no farther Enquiries into this Matter. Either his Lordship will own this *Right* to be in the *Church*, or he will not. If the *latter*, he even now denies to the *Church* all *Legislative Authority*. If the *former*, he grants her as much Authority in this respect as we desire him to grant her; and so we are agreed also upon this Part of the Controversy.

But



But how well soever we may agree with his Lordship with respect to what he has said *in these Passages*, I fear that when we come to examine what he has said *in his Sermon*, we shall find too much reason to differ with him. For there we are told that Christ *himself is the sole Lawgiver to his Subjects—in the Affairs of Conscience and Eternal Salvation*, p. 11. That it is *essential to it (the Church) that Christ himself be the sole Lawgiver—in all Points relating to the Favour or Displeasure of Almighty God*. That *all his Subjects—are equally Subjects to him, and that none of them any more than another hath Authority—to make new Laws—in Matters relating purely to Conscience or Salvation*. That *the Notion of the Church's being the Kingdom of Christ, doth absolutely exclude all other Legislators—in Matters relating to Conscience or the Favour of God*. And that *the Church cannot be Christ's Kingdom, if any mortal Men have such a Power of Legislation*, p. 16. These, as every one knows, are his Lordship's own Words, which I doubt found very differently in the Ears of most Men, from these, *No Man has such an Authority of imposing Laws, as that Christians shall be obliged to submit to those Laws, right or wrong, without examining whether what is enjoined thereby be agreeable to the Will of Christ*. For in these Passages his Lordship has declared *absolutely*, that there are *no other Lawgivers* in the Affairs of Conscience or Salvation, *i. e.* in the Affairs of Religion, *but Christ*. Now if this be true, it seems plain that the Church hath not only *no Authority to make new Laws absolutely*, but *no Authority to make any new Laws at all*.

I can think of but two Ways by which his Lordship can possibly endeavour to get clear of this Charge, and these are, by saying either, 1. That making Laws about *Matters indifferent* (which are confessedly the only Matters about which the Church has Authority to make Laws) is not making Laws *in Matters of Conscience, Salvation, or Religion*: Or, 2<sup>dly</sup>, That Laws made

made by an Authority *derived from Christ* (as the Authority of the Church is acknowledged to be) are properly *Christ's Laws*, and that therefore whatever Authority of making Laws is exercised by the Church, *Christ* is still properly *sole* Legislator. The *former* of these two Methods his Lordship has actually attempted, but (as I have already shewn) with such bad Success, that he has been forced to give us such a Notion of *Affairs of Conscience*, as makes all that he has said upon this Subject an entire Piece of — I will not say what. *Affairs of Conscience*, according to his Lordship, are manifestly *such* Affairs as neither *are* nor *can be* the *Subject Matter* of any *Human* Authority; so that it seems his Lordship has all this while been labouring to prove, that no Man upon Earth has Authority to make Laws about such Matters, about which it is in the nature of the thing impossible that any Man should have Authority to make Laws, and all this *by way of Inference* from *Christ's Prerogative*! I will be so just to his Lordship as to assure him, that before he told me so, I never did think so meanly of his Performance as to imagine this to be his Meaning, and I believe that there is not that Person now living who understood him after this manner. And therefore I should advise his Lordship to look out for some other Notion of *Affairs of Conscience*, were I not sensible that any Notion he can possibly fix upon, will be as little to the Purpose. His Lordship may tell us again and again if he pleases, that the *Time, Place, and Circumstances* of *Religious Worship*, are not *Affairs of Religion*; but the World, I fancy, will still believe that they are, because they have been ever called by that Name. He may tell us that no *indifferent* Matter in Religion is an *Affair of Conscience*, but others will still be equally at liberty to say that they are, because when *indifferent* Things are once enjoined by lawful Authority, it becomes a *Matter of Conscience* whether a Man complies with them or not. His Lordship therefore, I think, can hope for no Advantage from *this* Plea; and



and as to *the other*, it is so pitiful a one, that I promise my self his Lordship will not make use of it. For,

1. Tho' it be true that Laws made by an Authority derived from *Christ*, are properly *Christ's Laws*, yet they are not so properly *Christ's Laws*, but that they are also the Laws of *those* by whom they are immediately enacted; which is evident, because they become *Christ's Laws* no otherwise than by being first of all *theirs*. Whether his Lordship will agree to this Position, I cannot tell. There is a Passage in his Answer to Dr. *Snape*, which looks a little suspicious. (y) *If*, says his Lordship (speaking of Church Governours) *I find their Instructions agreeable to the Will of Christ; I obey them. Why? Not because of their Authority, but because of Christ's Authority. I obey him, not them.* If his Lordship would have this referr'd to *Interpreting* only, what he says is true, because in that Case (as I have shown) the Church has no Authority. But if he extends it any farther, I conceive it is not. For I would beg of his Lordship to resolve me this one Question. Whom do I obey by *Kneeling* at the *Sacrament*, or by *reading* the Book of *Common Prayer*? Do I obey *Christ*? Yes without doubt I do. But then I say withall, that I obey *the Church* as well as *Christ*, or rather that I obey *Christ* by obeying the *Church*, and no otherwise; For the Gospel has left it indifferent, whether I eat the *Lord's Supper* standing or kneeling; whether I *Pray* by a *Form* or without a *Form*, and therefore whatever Obligation there lies upon me to do either, it must arise from the *Interposition* of the *Church*. I do this therefore, *because of Christ's Authority*, and *because of the Churches Authority*, i. e. I do it because of *that Authority* which *Christ* hath lodged in the *Church*, and which she exercises by *Virtue* of his *Commission*. Now if there be any in the *Church*, by whose *Command* others may be bound to do that which other-

wise they would not be bound to do; there are then in the Church those who are proper *Legislators* or *Lawgivers*, because the proper Notion of *Legislative Power*, is, when there arises an *Obligation* to do any thing *immediately* from the *Will* or *Command* of another. It matters not here to consider how it comes to pass, that those Persons have a Power of obliging others by their Commands; for this is inquiring, not *whether they be* indeed *Lawgivers*, but *by what means* they are so, which let them be what they will, it alters not the Case. If any one has this Power *originally* in himself, *i. e. independently* of another, he is then *originally* or *independently* a *Lawgiver*. If he has it not *in himself*, but *from another*, tho' he is not *originally* or *independently*; yet so long as he has this Power, he is *properly* a *Lawgiver*. Upon Supposition therefore, that Christ has given to Men an Authority to *make Laws* in any Affairs, Christ will indeed be *sole original* or *independent* *Lawgiver* in his Church. But he will not be *absolutely sole* *Lawgiver*, because he has appointed *other Lawgivers under*, or *in subordination* to him. But

2. Suppose that it were consistent with Propriety of Speech to say, that Christ is *the sole Lawgiver* in his Church upon this Account, *viz.* because All Authority which the Church has to make Laws, is derived from him, and that it is *in this Sense only*, that his Lordship hath affirmed, that no Man hath Authority to make Laws in the Affairs of Conscience, *viz.* That no Man hath this Authority *in himself*, or *independently* on Christ. Upon this Supposition, his Lordship will indeed be cleared from saying any thing but what ought to be said; but then he will be made to have taken a great deal of Pains, in opposing a Doctrine which no Body maintains. For who ever taught or imagined that the Church had any Authority *in herself*, or *independently* on Christ? Besides, this Plea is inconsistent with his Lordship's

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own Defence: he is charged with denying to the Church *all* Authority to make *new Laws*. Hereupon he declares that he hath opposed *no* Authority, but an *absolute* Authority. But could he have pleaded this, if by saying that no Man *hath* Authority to make Laws in the Affairs of Conscience, he had meant that no Man hath *independently* on Christ an Authority to make Laws? It is manifest that he could not; for it is certain, and his Lordship will doubtless own, that *independently* on Christ, there is in any Man, or Men, not only no *absolute* Authority to make Laws in the Affairs of Conscience, but *no* Authority at all.

It is evident then, that his Lordship by saying that no Man *hath* Authority to make new Laws, must mean that Christ *hath* given no Man Authority to make new Laws; and this the very manner by which his Lordship hath every where expressed himself, does alone sufficiently shew. Christ, says he, hath *left behind him* no Authority. He hath *not* lodged in any Man or Men such Authority, &c; which Terms do naturally import a Derivation of Power from Christ. Now seeing his Lordship hath denied this Authority to Men, with respect to *ALL* Affairs of Conscience or Religion, and seeing those *indifferent* Matters in Religion about which the Church must have Authority to make Laws, or she can have no Authority at all to make Laws, are, as has been shewn, according to all common Construction, Affairs of *that Kind*, it plainly follows that his Lordship hath in these Passages denied to the Church, not only an *absolute legislative* Authority, but *all legislative* Authority whatsoever.

There is one Passage more in his Lordship's *Sermon*, which I think will serve instead of many, and that is to be met with p. 12. *Whoever can add new Laws to those of Christ, equally obligatory, is as truly a King as Christ himself.* In these Words his Lordship

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has manifestly denied to the Church such an Authority will empower her to make Laws which shall in any Case, or under any Circumstances, be equally obligatory with the Laws of Christ. I say, in any Case, or under any Circumstances, for the Proposition you see is universal, and without any manner of Limitation. Now I think it is plain, even to Demonstration, that either the Church must have an Authority to make Laws, which under some Circumstances, shall be equally obligatory with the Laws of Christ, or that she has no Authority to make any Laws at all. For whatever Authority the Church has, is derived from Christ; consequently Circumstances may so happen, that those Laws which she enacts by Virtue of that Authority, shall oblige as much, as if those same Laws were enacted immediately by Christ; because Circumstances may so happen, that Disobedience to those Laws, shall imply Disobedience to Christ. For if Circumstances can never so happen, that Disobedience to Laws enacted by the Church, shall imply Disobedience to Christ, it is manifest that Christ hath not lodged in the Church any legislative Authority.

But what, you will ask, are those Circumstances which being put, Disobedience to Laws enacted by the Church, will imply Disobedience to Christ? I answer; those very same Circumstances, and no other than those, which must concur to render any Laws enacted by Men obligatory. These Circumstances are, 1. That the Subjects either do understand, or are capable of informing themselves rightly, who those Persons are, who are set over them as Legislators. 2. That they also do know, or may, if it be not their own Fault, know, that the Laws enacted by them are such, as they are empower'd to enact by Virtue of that Authority that is lodged in them. Without these Circumstances, I say, no Laws made by Men can possibly oblige; but with them Laws made by the Church, as well as all other Laws made



made by Men, *must oblige*, if the Church has any Authority to make Laws *at all*, and that *equally* with Laws enacted by *Christ immediately*. For that they do *at all* oblige, is owing to *Christ's Authority*; now if these Laws do oblige by *Virtue of Christ's Authority*, to disobey them, must be to disobey *Christ's Authority*.

Had his Lordship said no more than this, That whoever can add new Laws to those of *Christ*, which shall be *always* or *to all Persons* upon whom they are imposed, *equally obligatory*, he is as truly a King as *Christ* himself, his Assertion would then have been true. For here indeed lies the main difference between the Authority of *Christ*, and the Authority of the Church, which makes the one *absolute*, and the other *not so*. When once I am satisfied that *Christ* has commanded any thing, I obey without delay: Because *Christ* being *Supreme Legislator*, and consequently there being no Laws *superior* to his, by which his Laws ought to be *judged of*, it must be sufficient to induce an Obligation upon me to do any thing, barely *that Christ has commanded it*. But it is not so with respect to the Church. She receiveth all her Legislative Authority *from Christ*, and must therefore exercise it *in Subordination to Christ*. Her Laws therefore must be *compared* with the original Law of *Christ*, to see whether she does not transgress the Bounds of that Authority which *Christ* hath reposed in her. If I cannot satisfy my self of this, her Laws, tho', in themselves, they be never so rightfully made, cannot possibly oblige me; but if I am, or may be satisfied of this, they certainly will, as much as any Law of *Christ's own immediate Appointment*; and therefore tho' it be true to say that Laws made by the Church, will not *always* oblige as much as the Laws of *Christ*, yet to say (as his Lordship hath in effect said) that they *never can*, is

not true, nor can be maintained as such, without denying that the Church hath *any* Authority.

By this time therefore I think it is manifest that his Lordship hath in his *Sermon* denied to the Church *all* Authority of *making* Laws. I am very well aware that he does there in some places argue against an *absolute* Authority to make new Laws, against a Power of adding Laws in such a Sense, as that Christians shall be indispensably and absolutely obliged to obey those Laws. But if any one will infer from hence that his Lordship intended to deny to the Church *no* other Legislative Authority, but an *absolute* Legislative Authority, he may be deceived. For, as I have before observed, his Lordship might very consistently affirm at one time that the Church hath *no* Authority, and at another that she hath *no absolute* Authority. These two Propositions are so far from being contradictory, that if the former be true, the latter must necessarily be so too. I grant indeed, that if this be the Case, his Lordship's Limitation will be utterly insignificant. But this can be no Objection, because, as I have shewn, his Lordship has used the same Limitation when speaking of *Interpreters*, in which Instance it is notorious that nothing either was or could be intended by it. But why do I build upon Conjectures? I will give you a plain and demonstrative Proof that his Lordship in *this* very Instance did mean *nothing at all* by this Limitation, and that is, that he has in his *Sermon* denied to any of Christ's Subjects Authority to *add* to the Laws of Christ, *without* this Limitation. His Words are these: *All his (Christ's) Subjects are equally his Subjects, and as such equally without Authority to alter, to add to, or to interpret his Laws, so as to claim the absolute Submission of others to such Interpretation, p. 30.* This Passage is very remarkable upon several Accounts. As, 1. That the Paragraph in which it stands is a Recapitulation of the whole *Sermon*, and consequent-



ly that his Lordship must here be supposed to have expressed his Meaning in every Particular mentioned, with the greatest Care and Exactness. 2. That he here speaks of Laws *universally*, or in *general*, and not of Laws in relation to *Affairs of Conscience, Religion, or Salvation*. 3. That the *Subjects of Christ* are declared to have no more Authority to *add* to the Laws of *Christ*, than they have to *alter* them. For, 4. There is no Limitation mentioned, but only with respect to *Interpretation*, which yet it was both easy and natural for him to have mentioned, as well with respect to *making Laws*, if he had thought that what he said upon that Point ought to be subjected to *any* Limitation. What others may think of this I cannot tell, but to me it is so flagrant a Proof how much his Lordship has played with Words throughout this whole Controversy, that I shall take the Courage to assure him once for all, that henceforward I never shall in any Case trust to such Limitations more.

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#### C H A P. IV.

*Of the Authority of the Church to judge, censure, and punish.*

Bishop of Bangor.

**T**HE Authority which I deny to any Men, is such an Authority to judge, censure, or punish, — as implies in it an Authority to make Decisions, which shall affect the State of Christ's Subjects with respect to the Favour of God. *Answer to the Representation, Chap. 1. Sect. 6. p. 28. I have opposed no Authority, unless it — be an Authority — the Declarations of which are made to affect Men's Estate with regard to the Favour of God. Ibid. p. 29.*

## REMARK.

For the clear stating of the Point between his Lordship and the Committee upon this Head, let it be observed,

1<sup>st</sup>, That as no *Protestant* does claim, so it is certain that the *Committee* has not claimed to the Church such an Authority in every respect of judging, censuring, or punishing, as his Lordship opposes. For the Authority of judging, censuring, or punishing, which his Lordship opposes, is such an Authority as implies, that those whom the Church judges, censures, or punishes, shall therefore be shut out of God's Favour; or in other Words, such an Authority as implies, that the *Eternal Salvation* of others shall depend upon her Judgment. This will be very plain from the following Passages. (2) I deny — all such Authority (of judging) as can oblige Almighty God to ratify any Sentence in Heaven passed here on Earth — all such Authority as pretends to throw Men out of God's Favour by the Determination or Excommunication of Men. Again, (a) A Judge in that Case (*viz.* with respect to the Behaviour of Christians in Points relating to the Favour of God) is one by whose Sentence it is determined whether a Man shall enjoy the Tokens of God's Favour or Displeasure. Thus our Saviour is Judge. He is qualified to pass Sentence — and upon his passing it the Man's Condition is determined irreversibly. And thus he alone is Judge. For what I affirm of him, I deny of others in the same Sense in which I affirm it of him, and in no other. The Authority of judging therefore which his Lordship now says he has denied, and does deny to the Church, is such an Authority only as shall oblige Almighty God to ratify her Sentence, or by the Sentence whereof a Man's Condition with respect to the Favour of God shall be determined irreversibly.

(2) Answ. to the Represent. Chap. 1. Sect. 9. p. 46.

(a) Ibid. Sect. 7. p. 33.



Now such an Authority as this, I say, the Committee have not claimed to the Church. They have indeed (as it seems to me) supposed and censured his Lordship as denying that a *judicial Sentence*, when it is *rightly passed* by the Church, does affect Men's Conditions with respect to the Favour of God. But they have not supposed that a *judicial Sentence* of the Church passed *right or wrong* has this effect; and consequently they have not supposed that God is obliged to execute (i. e. always to execute) her Sentence, or that Men's Conditions with respect to the Favour of God are thereby determined irreversibly. The Passage upon which I found my Judgment is *Repres.* p. 5. where the Committee having observed, concerning some preceding Passages cited from his Lordship's Sermon, that if the Doctrine contained in them be admitted of, there neither is, nor has been since our Saviour's Time, any Authority in the Christian Church — not even in the Apostles themselves; they add, to which effect his Lordship farther expresseth himself, p. 14. "When they (i. e. any Men on Earth) make any of their own Declarations or Decisions to concern and affect the State of Christ's Subjects with respect to the Favour of God, this is so far taking Christ's Kingdom out of his Hands." — Which Words (proceed they) are not restrained to such Decisions as are inconsistent with the Doctrines of the Gospel, as appears not only from the general manner in which he hath expressed himself, but from his direct Words, p. 15. "And whether they happen to agree with him, or to differ from him, as long as they are — Judges without any Interposition from Christ, either to guide or correct their Decisions, they are Kings of this Kingdom, &c." From this Passage it seems evident, 1<sup>st</sup>, That the Committee have censured his Lordship as denying (and therefore did suppose that it ought to be affirmed) that the State of Christ's Subjects with respect to the Favour of God, may be affected

affected by the *Declarations* or *Decisions* of Men. Yet, 2dly, It is no less evident that they have *not* censured his Lordship as denying (and consequently did *not* suppose that it ought to be affirmed) that every *Declaration* or *Decision* of Men does *affect* the *State* of *Christ's* Subjects with regard to the *Favour* of God. For they blame his Lordship that he had not *restrained* his *Words* to such *Decisions* as are inconsistent with the *Doctrines* of the *Gospel*; which implies, that had he so restrained them, his Lordship would have denied no more than what in their *Opinion* ought to be denied. As this shews that the *Committee* are here speaking of the *Church* in *general*, and not particularly of the *Apostles* (who to be sure neither did nor could make any *Decisions* inconsistent with the *Doctrines* of the *Gospel*) so it does fully demonstrate the *Truth* of that which I have laid down, viz. That in the *Opinion* of the *Committee* a *judicial* *Sentence* passed by the *Church* does *then*, and *then only*, affect the *State* of others with respect to the *Favour* of God, when it is *rightly* or *deservedly* passed. For *then*, and *then only*, it is that such a *Sentence* or *Decision* is *consistent* with or agreeable to the *Doctrines* of the *Gospel*.

His Lordship I know (b) thinks it *impossible* to be conceived, that a *Sentence* passed by the *Church* should have *any effect* at all upon the *State* or *Condition* of others with respect to the *Favour* of God. And indeed it should seem that if such a *Sentence* has *never* any effect but when it is *rightly* passed, the *Displeasure* of God arises not from *that Sentence*, but from *those Crimes* upon the *Account* of which Men have deserved that *Sentence*; because if the *Sentence* *it self* were the *Cause* of God's *Displeasure*, that *Displeasure* should *always* follow, let the *Sentence* be either

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(b) See his Reasoning upon this Point, *ibid.* p. 36, 37.



right or wrong. But let this be as it will, Men are not to be charged with Notions drawn from Consequences, which either they do not see, or will not own; and therefore since the *Committee* have plainly enough declared that they ascribe *no spiritual Effect* to Church Censures, but when they are *deservedly* inflicted, we must take this as their Opinion, and leave them to account for it as well as they can. In the mean while I must observe, that this Difference between his Lordship and the *Committee* is of no manner of Importance, either with respect to the State and Condition of Christians, or with respect to the main of the Charge. Not with respect to the *State and Condition of Christians*; for the *Committee* agree with his Lordship, that Persons *unjustly* or *undeservedly* censured by the Church, are notwithstanding that Censure still in *God's Favour*. Again, his Lordship agrees with the *Committee*, that Persons *deservedly* censured by the Church are *out of God's Favour*, only his Lordship ascribes this *wholly* to their own *Behaviour*, whilst the *Committee* seem in part to attribute it to the *Censure* of the Church also. Not with respect to the *main* of the Charge. For,

2. The *main Charge* of the *Committee* against his Lordship is, that he hath denied to the Church (c) *ALL Authority* to judge, censure, or punish Offenders in the Affairs of Conscience and Eternal Salvation, i. e. all such Superiority of some in the Church above others, as shall empower or authorize them to examine into the religious Conduct of others, and to pass Sentence upon them judicially. It was thus that the *Committee*, and particularly the Reverend Dr. Sherlock, understood his Lordship: But his Lordship has been pleased (upon what Account he best knows) *not thus* to understand them, but to turn the Controversy

quite upon another Point, which is so far from being any thing to the Purpose, that it makes the whole Dispute silly and ridiculous. (d) *His Lordship* (says that learned and excellent Divine) affirms, that *Christ is the sole Judge of the Behaviour of his Subjects in the Affairs of Conscience—We say that Christ is not sole Judge—For the Church has a Right to judge of the Behaviour of Men with respect to the Laws of Christ.* What says his Lordship to this? Why, that (e) *he might have added, if he had so pleased, that every particular Christian has a Right to judge, nay, cannot help judging of the Behaviour of others.* From this, and from the whole of his Lordship's Reasoning upon this Head, it is evident to the Eye of every Reader, that his Lordship represents the *Dean* as claiming to the Church a Right to judge, in the same Sense, and in that only, in which every private Christian may, and must judge of the Behaviour of others. But does his Lordship think it consistent with any tolerable Propriety of Speech to say, that a Man has a Right to do that which he cannot help doing? Will he say, for Instance, that a Man who has his Senses and his Reason perfect, has a Right to see, or to understand? Why, so it seems indeed: for he says, that (f) *there is A RIGHT in all Christians TO SEE open Wickedness, and TO JUDGE wilful Sin to be contrary to Christ's Laws!* His Lordship might very well be surprized to see a learned Member of the Committee contending with so much Zeal and Warmth, that there are Men who have a Right to judge in such a Sense as this: But it is equally surprizing to me, that his Lordship should imagine, that a Right (as his Lordship's Phrase is) to see open Wickedness, and to judge (i. e. to esteem) wilful Sin to be contrary to Christ's

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(d) Answer to a Letter, p. 56, 57. (e) Ibid. Sect. 7. p. 30.  
 (f) Ibid. p. 30.



*Laws, was that Right of judging which Dr. Sherlock had contended for, in Opposition to him. His Lordship may use Words as he pleases, but till I have it from under the Dean's own Hand that he so confounds the Idea's of Things, as to make no difference between Right and natural Power or Necessity, I shall believe that by a Right to judge, he meant a Right to judge; and that when he says, that the Church has a Right to judge, he means that there are some particular Persons to whom, in Contradistinction to all others, it properly belongs to judge. This latter his Lordship saw as clearly as I do; for why else does he say, he might have added, that every particular Christian has a Right to judge? And how then could his Lordship mistake him so, as to think that the judging which he was pleading for, could be any thing else but judging with Authority? Had not the Dean as well as his Lordship a Right to understand, that every one must needs see, who has his Eyes open, and judge according to what he sees? And was it possible then that the seeing open Wickedness, the judging or esteeming wilful Sin to be contrary to Christ's Law, and the notorious Sinner unworthy of being acknowledged as a Brother, could be that which was claimed by him as a Prerogative in one Christian above another? I shall not for my Part pretend to give an Account of this Part of his Lordship's Conduct. But his Enemies, I fear, will be but too apt to think that all this was contrived on purpose to lead his Reader off from the Point in Controversy, and to pave the Way for a more easy Conquest. For his Lordship is sure to triumph over those who have censured, or shall censure him, as denying to the Church a Right to judge of the Behaviour of others, if by that Right they mean a Right to see open Wickedness, which his Lordship can never be supposed to have denied to any, Christian, or not*

Christian, and which indeed is, properly speaking? no *Right* at all.

You see by this time what is the true Point between his Lordship and the *Committee*. His Lordship says he has denied to the Church no Authority of judging, but such an Authority as implies a Right to determine Men's Conditions with regard to the Favour of God. The *Committee* say that he has denied to the Church *all* Authority of judging whatsoever, i. e. all such Superiority or Pre-eminence of any in the Church above others, as will authorize them to examine into the religious Conduct of others, and to pass Sentence upon them *judicially*. Now whether his Lordship and the *Committee* can be brought to an Agreement concerning the Effect of this Sentence, with respect to the Favour or Displeasure of Almighty God or not, it matters not much. For if his Lordship has denied to the Church *all* Authority of judging, the Charge of the *Committee* will be made good, let their Notions concerning the Nature of that Authority be either right or wrong. Whether therefore his Lordship has in his *Sermon* denied to the Church *all* Authority of judging, I shall now examine.

That his Lordship has in his *Sermon* denied to the Church all Authority to judge, censure, or punish others, in the Affairs of Conscience and Eternal Salvation, there is no room to dispute. For P. 11. he says expressly, with respect to Christ's Subjects, that Christ is himself the sole Judge of their Behaviour in the Affairs of Conscience and Eternal Salvation. P. 15. That Christ is himself the sole Judge of his Subjects in all Points relating to the Favour or Displeasure of Almighty GOD, P. 16. That no one of them (Christ's Subjects) any more than another, hath Authority—to judge, censure, or punish the Servants of another Master in Matters relating purely to Conscience or Salvation, and the like. The Question therefore is, whether his Lordship hath not in these Passages denied



nied to the Church *all* Authority of judging, censuring, or punishing others; or whether to say, that Christ is the sole Judge of the Behaviour of his Subjects in the Affairs of Conscience, &c. be only to say, that none but Christ hath Authority so to judge and censure others, as that *the State and Condition of others with respect to the Favour of God, shall thereby be determined irreversibly.* His Lordship you see is of Opinion that it is the same thing. For a Judge in Points relating to the Favour or Displeasure of Almighty God, or (which is the same thing) in Affairs of Conscience, he tells us *is one by whose Sentence it is determined whether a Person shall enjoy the Tokens of God's Favour or Displeasure.* But upon what Account does his Lordship affirm this? Upon no Account that I can see, but only because he is pleased to affirm it: for Reason I profess solemnly I can discover none. That a Person who can determine whether another shall enjoy the Tokens of God's Favour or Displeasure, is a Judge of Men's Behaviour in the Affairs of Conscience, or in Points relating to the Favour or Displeasure of Almighty God, there can be no doubt: But what his Lordship means is, that *none but such a one is a Judge of Men's Behaviour in those Affairs; which is not true, unless there be something in the Notion of those Affairs which implies, that whoever hath Authority to judge of Men's Behaviour with respect to them, must thereby irreversibly determine their Conditions with respect to the Favour of God.* For if the Notion of Affairs of Conscience, &c. be such, as that a Man may properly be said to judge of the Behaviour of another with regard to them, tho' he neither does nor can determine his Condition with respect to God's Favour, it will then be false to say, that *none but those who can determine the Condition of others, &c. are Judges in Affairs of Conscience; and consequently his Lordship, by affirming that Christ is the sole Judge of the Behaviour*

*haviour* of his Subjects in those Affairs, must have said something *more*, than that none but he hath Authority *so* to judge his Subjects, as that their *Condition* with respect to the *Favour* of God shall thereby be *determined Irreversibly*.

We are now therefore brought back again to the old Enquiry, *viz.* What are *Affairs of Conscience*? How his Lordship hath explained this Phrase, and how little that Explication suits with his Purpose, has been so fully shewn already; that nothing more needs to be said about it. If his Lordship can persuade any to believe that his Meaning was to prove, that *Christ* hath given no Man *Authority to judge* in those Affairs in which no Man *possibly can judge*, I wish him Joy of such Proselytes. The Number of them, I fancy, will be but small, and I must beg Leave to assure his Lordship that I shall not make one amongst them. I say it again, that *all* Affairs in which the Consciences, the Religion, the Salvation of Men are concerned, are *Affairs of Conscience, Religion, and Salvation*, or, if you please, *Points relating to the Favour or Displeasure of God*. To affirm therefore that no one but *Christ* hath *Authority to judge* of the *Behaviour* of others with respect to these Affairs, is the same as to affirm, that no one but *Christ* hath *Authority to judge* of the *religious Conduct* of others, or of the *Behaviour* of others with respect to the *Laws of Religion*; which is the very thing charged upon his Lordship by the Committee.

But it will not be fair to pass over the Reasons assigned by his Lordship, to shew that these Passages cannot be understood as denying to Men *all Right to judge*, nor any other Right, but such as implies a Power of *determining* other Men's *Conditions* with regard to the *Favour of God*: To these therefore I now betake my self. And,

1. His Lordship is pleased to alledge, that seeing he (g) *denies that of Men* which he affirms of Christ, and



seeing he does it by way of Inference from the Prerogative of Christ, he does not, he cannot mean to deny it of them in any other Sense but that in which he affirms it of Christ—Without any more ado I shall here join Issue with his Lordship; and I think verily that what he now says, is as plain a Confession of the Fact charged upon him as is possible. For that which his Lordship affirms of Christ is, that he is Judge of the Behaviour of his Subjects in Matters of Religion. What does he mean by this? Why, certainly thus much at least, that he hath Authority to judge, i. e. he hath Authority to enquire into the Religious Conduct of his Subjects, and to pass Sentence upon them decisively, or in a judicial manner. Now seeing that which he denies of Men is, that they are Judges, and seeing he denies this in the same Sense in which he affirms it of Christ: his Lordship must necessarily be understood as denying it of Men, that they have Authority to judge, or that they have Authority to pass Sentence upon others decisively. What his Lordship hath observed a little before, viz. That Christ is in no other Sense Judge of the Behaviour of Christians—but as their Condition will and must be determined by his Sentence, will not in the least help him. For either he uses the Word *CONDITION* indefinitely, or he does not. If the former, he still denies all Authority to Men to judge or pass Sentence upon others decisively. For by his own Rule he denies to Men all Authority to determine, i. e. in any sense or in any respect to determine the Condition of others by their Sentence. But if there be in Men an Authority to pass Sentence upon others decisively, there must be in Men an Authority in some sense or in some respects to determine the Condition of others; because if that Sentence does in no sense or in no respect determine the Condition of others, it is a Contradiction to say that it is decisive. If his Lordship uses the Word *CONDITION* in a definite Sense, as signifying the Condition of Christians with regard to the Favour of God, and would argue from thence

thence that he could be understood as denying to Men no other Authority, but an Authority to pass *such a Sentence as shall determine the Condition of others in that respect*; I answer, that the Argument does by no means hold. For the Argument you see is drawn from the Notion of the Word *JUDGE*, which, says his Lordship, ought in reason to be understood *in the same Sense* when applied to Men as when applied to Christ. I grant that it ought, and I do understand it so when I say, that *Christ hath Authority to judge*, and that *Man hath not Authority to judge*, whether I intend hereby to deny that Man hath Authority to *determine the Condition of others with respect to the Favour of God*, or with respect to *any thing else*. For the nature of the Sentence passed, and the Effect of that Sentence with respect to the Condition of him upon whom it is passed, do by no means enter into the Notion of Judging; because a Judge is one who hath Authority to pass *any Sentence which shall be decisive*, and therefore the Word retains its Sense when applied to *Persons and Cases* where the Sentence, and the Effect of it, are not the same, but different. Thus when I say of *one Man*, whose sole and proper Office it is to *determine Men to Life or Death*, or to judge in *capital Cases*, that he is a judge; and of *another*, whose Office it is to *determine in Matters of Right or Property*, that he is also a Judge, I mean the same thing by the Word Judge in both Instances, *i. e.* I mean *one* who has Authority to pass Sentence *definitively*. In like manner, when I affirm of Christ, who alone hath Authority to *determine Men to God's Favour or Displeasure*, that he is Judge; and of Men, who have Authority, tho' not to *determine others to God's Favour or Displeasure*, yet to pass Sentence *definitively* in some other respect; that they are also Judges; the Signification of that Word is manifestly the same, when applied to the one, and when applied to the other. Wherefore as it would be improper, and false even in the same Sense of the Word,



Word, to affirm of him whose Office it is to judge in *Crpital Cases*, that he is *sole Judge in Civil Affairs*, in Opposition to the other whose Office it is to judge in Matters of *Right*; so it is also improper and false even in the same sense of the Word, to affirm of *Christ* that he is *sole Judge* of the Behaviour of his Subjects in *Matters of Religion*, in Opposition to the *Church*, if there be any in the Church whom he has empowered to judge of the Religious Conduct of others, *i. e.* to *pass Sentence* upon others, which Sentence shall in *any Sense*, or upon *any Account* be *definitive*. — But with Submission to his Lordship, I think, that there is a manifest Fallacy in this latter Assertion. *Christ*, says he, *is in no other Sense Judge*, &c. What does his Lordship mean by this? If he means that *Christ doth actually exercise* no other Judgment, than that by which he determines the Condition of his Subjects, with respect to the Favour of God; it is true, but then it is nothing to the Purpose. For the thing to be considered here, I conceive, is, not what Judgment *Christ actually doth exercise*, but what Judgment he *hath Authority to exercise*. If therefore this be his Lordship's Meaning, *viz.* That *Christ hath Authority to be Judge in no other Sense*, but as their Condition with respect to the Favour of God shall be determined by his Sentence, the Proposition is *not true*: For whatever Authority of judging else there is, or can be conceived to be in the Church, it is *originally in Christ*, and must be so, because the Church neither has, nor can have any Authority but what she receives from *Christ*. I leave it therefore to any one to consider, whether since his Lordship hath affirmed of *Christ universally*, that he alone *hath Authority to judge*, he must not according to his own Rule, be understood as denying of *the Church universally*, that she hath *any Authority to judge*; or whether, supposing that his Lordship had intended to deny to the Church *all Authority of judging*, he could possibly have expressed

pressed himself more clearly, than by saying, *No one hath Authority to judge others, but Christ.*

2. His Lordship alledges farther, That (b) if from his asserting *Christ to be the sole Judge of his Subjects*, you will infer that he denies *all Right in any Christian Church to judge and punish Offenders*, you may as well, and as justly infer, that he has also effectually excluded the Civil Magistrate from punishing the greatest Malefactors; and that the Committee might have put this as strong under the first Head of the Charge, as under the other. Now to this I answer, 1st. That if it were true, which his Lordship here supposes, viz. That those Passages where he has denied to Men an Authority of judging, censuring, or punishing others, and attributed it solely to Christ, are as strong against the Right of the Civil Magistrate to judge and punish Malefactors, as they are against the Right of the Church to judge, and punish Offenders, I should not in the least scruple to say, that his Lordship has effectually destroyed both. But 2dly, I will speak more favourably of these Passages than his Lordship does, and assure him that I am far from thinking that the Argument from them, is equally conclusive in both Cases, or rather, that it is at all conclusive with respect to the Power of the Civil Magistrate, tho' it does very strongly conclude against the Power of the Church. His Lordship needs not be told that the Authority of the Church (if she has any) to judge, and punish Offenders, and of the Civil Magistrate, stand upon two different Bottoms; That the Office of the latter respects the Good of Human Society as such, and consequently, that if the Actions or Behaviour of Men affect or hurt the Publick Good, the Magistrate has a Right to punish them. Whereas the Church has no Right to concern herself with the Actions of Men, consider'd as affecting the Publick Good. She judges

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(b) Ibid. p. 47, 48.



them with a View to *Religion* only, and punishes the Offender, not as transgressing the Laws of *Human Society*, but as transgressing the Laws of *Christ*. Now it is very plain, even so plain, that his Lordship, I know, would be angry if we did not see it, that the *Affairs of Conscience or Religion*, which he so often speaks of in his *Sermon*, must at least be limited to the *Affairs of Religion consider'd as such*. When therefore his Lordship denies of Men, that they have Authority to judge in these *Affairs*, this effectually excludes the *Church* from judging Offenders, because these are the *Affairs* in which either she has a Right to judge, or she has no Right to judge at all. But it does not therefore follow, that he excludes the *Civil Magistrate* from a Right to judge *Malefactors*. Because, tho' it may be true (I do not say it is true) that the *Civil Magistrate* has no Right to punish a *Malefactor*, considered as transgressing the Laws of *Religion*, yet he has a Right to punish him as hurting the *Publick Good*, or as breaking in upon the Laws of *Human Society*. This Objection might have been put as strong with respect to the Business of *Legislation*; but the same Answer will equally serve in both Cases.

3. His Lordship hath said in his *Sermon*, that *Christ* hath left behind him *no Judges OVER the Consciences or Religion of his People*. Now this Word *OVER*, his Lordship in his *Answer* lays a particular Emphasis upon, and seems to think it will stand him in great stead. This I gather from hence, that he hath every where taken Care to have it printed in *Capitals*, which indeed is a very good help to bad Eyes, but how it can help the *Understandings* of those, who want to be informed what it is that his Lordship means by judging *OVER* the Consciences or the Religion of others, I do not, I confess, so readily apprehend. That which his Lordship would have us believe, is, that an Authority to judge *OVER* the Consciences or Religion of others, (i) implies an Au-

(i) Ibid. Sect. 6, p. 28.

thority to make Decisions which shall affect the State of Christ's Subjects, with regard to the Favour of God; which, for any thing I can tell to the contrary, may (in his Notion of that Phrase) be true. But whether it be so or not, I cannot be certain, till I know what that Notion is, which I am not able distinctly to gather from any thing that he hath said. But whatever it be to judge *OVER* the Consciences or Religion of others, this we are sure of, viz. That it is to do something, which no Man upon Earth possibly can do. For says his Lordship, (k) *there never were, nor ever CAN BE IN THE NATURE OF THE THING, any Christians appointed to rule over other Christians—so as to be Judges OVER their Consciences and Religion.* This is the old Story over again: His Lordship is resolved to have it, that he has been all this while disputing against mere *Impossibilities*; and if it must be so, I cannot tell how to help it. But I must assure his Lordship once more, that I always understood him as opposing an Authority to judge *over the Consciences and Religion of others* in a possible Sense, and that I never yet met with one Soul, whether Friend or Enemy, that had so much as a Thought of understanding him otherwise. Now the only possible Sense in which one Man may be said to judge *over the Consciences or Religion of others*, is, judging of the outward Conduct or Behaviour of others, with respect to the Law of Conscience or Religion; and to say, that no one but Christ hath a Right to do this, if it be not to deny to the Church all Authority of judging and punishing Offenders, I must for ever despair of knowing when a thing is denied, and when it is affirmed. But

4. Admitting that to judge *OVER* the Consciences or Religion of others, did according to the most obvious and common Acceptation of the Words, imply an Authority to determine the Condition of others, with respect to the Favour of God; the Passa-

(k) Ibid. Sect. 11. p. 63.



ges where this Phrase is used cannot, to be sure, be of greater Weight than those where *this* Authority is denied of Men *in express Terms*. Of this latter Sort there is one Passage to be met with in his Lordship's *Sermon*, and his Lordship thinks it (1) *but common Justice*, that this should be taken in towards fixing his Meaning. That is, his Lordship thinks it just to infer, that because he has in one Place denied to the Church an Authority to *determine the Condition* of others, with respect to the *Favour of God*, therefore he has *no where else* denied *any other* Authority. But I have before shown, that there is no manner of Consequence in this way of Arguing; and I can never think any such *Demand* from his Lordship to be *just*, till he will be pleased to write in such a manner, as that we may be assured that he has a Meaning in *every thing* which he says. I have already shown from two notorious Instances, that his Lordship has denied Authority to the Church in a *limited* Sense, when yet in those very Instances, he not only does not own, but expressly denies that she has *any* Authority. If he could do this in *two* Instances, he may as well do it in a *third*; and if in a *third*, in a *fourth*, and so on *ad infinitum*: Now whether when *Limitations* are trifled withal at this rate, such *Limitations* can be any certain Rule whereby to judge of an Author's Meaning, I leave it to any serious and understanding Person to consider.

Upon the whole therefore I conclude; That his Lordship hath denied to the Church, not only an Authority to determine the Condition of others *with respect to the Favour of God*, but an Authority *in any Sense* to determine the Condition of others, *i. e.* All Authority of *judging and passing Sentence* upon others, *definitively*. If any one should now ask, what sort of *definitive* Judgment that is, which I suppose to be in the Church, or *in what Sense* the Church

(1) Ibid. Sect. 7. p. 31. 34.

has Authority to *determine the Condition of others*; I answer that she hath Authority to determine the Condition of others with respect to *External Communion*. The Case as I take it is this. *Christ* hath given to the Governours of the Church, a Right to examine into the religious Conduct of those under their Care; and when any one of them shall have departed from the Doctrines of the Gospel, either in *Faith* or in *Practice*, to declare him unworthy of being owned and received as a Brother. This *Declaration* or *Sentence* shall thus far be *definitive*, viz. That the *Inferior Clergy* shall hereby be obliged to refuse to such a Person all Tokens of Christian Fellowship, and particularly and especially to deny him the Use of the *Holy Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood*. And farther; that all *Inferiors*, both *Clergy* and *Laity*, shall be bound (so far as the Circumstances of the World will permit) to *avoid his Company*, unless it be to *admonish* and make him better. Thus the Man's Condition with respect to *External Communion*, is determined by the Church. And if thus much at least be not implied under the Notion of *Excommunication*, recommended by the Scripture, and the Practice of all Ages; I shall take his Lordship's Advice, and (m) *in Pity forbear to mention the Word*. Tho' it will be with some other *Resentment*, that I shall mention the Names of those who have by the most solemn Engagements, bound themselves to exercise an Authority which they openly disclaim.

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#### C H A P. V.

*Some farther Remarks upon his Lordship's Answer to the Representation.*

**I**T has been shewn in the foregoing Chapters, that his Lordship hath in his *Sermon* denied all Authority to the Church both *generally* and *particularly*;

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(m) Ibid. p. 39.



and consequently that it is not *truly* affirmed by his Lordship, that he hath denied *no* Authority, but *absolute* Authority. But were this the whole of the Case, tho' the *Committee* would be sufficiently vindicated as to the first Branch of their Charge, yet his Lordship would be somewhat pardonable. To use Words which, according to a nice and accurate Construction, express a great deal more than a Man intends, is a failing, which in some Degree or other, is common to most Writers; and notwithstanding the Matter treated of by his Lordship, is of such Weight and Importance, as required him to have been particularly careful not to fall into Mistakes of this Kind; I should nevertheless be very ready to admit of the Plea of *Human Frailty* on his Behalf, could I but see that there is any room for it, being much rather desirous, that he should be found to have been *unwary* in his *Expressions*, than *not Orthodox* in his *Opinions*. But upon a serious, and (as I hope) impartial Examination of the whole of what his Lordship has said upon this Head, in his *Answer to the Representation*, I am verily persuaded, that it is his Lordship's real Sentiment, that the Church hath *no* Authority, and consequently that it was in his *Sermon*, his *Intention* to deny that she hath *any*. The Reasons why I am thus persuaded, I shall briefly subjoin, humbly submitting them to his Lordship's, and to my Readers Consideration.

In the first place then, I observe that his Lordship hath no where in his Answer, *owned* that the Church hath *any* Authority; on the contrary, the most favourable Passages carry with them such an Air of *reservedness*, as would incline any one rather to believe it to be his Opinion, that she hath *none*, than that she hath *any*. At p. 25. (which Passage has been already cited, Chap. 1.) his Lordship, as you may remember, after having said, that he had *denied no Authority, but absolute Authority*, adds, *IF in the Christian Church there*  
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*be an Authority in Superiors properly so called, i. e. (for this is what his Lordship means) an Authority properly so called in Superiors, and an Obligation in inferiors to submit to mere Human Authority properly called, which is not Indispensable—I am, notwithstanding any thing I have said, as much at liberty to declare for it as themselves. To the same purpose, Chap. 1. Sect. 17. p. 87. These Learned Persons can shew us, that there is a Rule, or an Authority properly so called in Ecclesiastical Governours, which is not absolute; that there are Rulers, and Judges in the visible Church, properly speaking, who are not absolute; and there is an Obligation, properly so called, upon Inferiors, to submit to Ecclesiastical Decisions, which is not absolute, or indispensable; or they cannot. If they cannot; then it can be no Crime I hope, in the Judgment of Christians and Protestants, should it be granted upon this Supposition, that in the Sermon, All Authority, All Rulers, and Judges in the visible Church are laid aside. If they can, as soon as they have plainly fixed this Point, I am full as free as any of themselves, to declare for Rule and Authority, Rulers and Judges, in the visible Church, notwithstanding all that I have declared against them, &c. It is very certain I think, that if in Superiors there be not an Authority properly so called, there is in Superiors no Authority; and that if there be not in Inferiors an Obligation properly so called, to submit to Ecclesiastical Decisions, there is no Obligation; I will therefore leave it to any one to judge, whether these Passages do not discover in his Lordship a secret Persuasion, that there is not in Superiors any Authority, and that there lies upon Inferiors no Obligation to submit to Ecclesiastical Decisions. For why else should his Lordship so cautiously at every turn, insert the Words properly so called, which had never been used by any of his Opposers? And why should he put the Issue of his Defense, upon what the Committee should have to say upon this Subject, and not upon any thing which could be offered by himself? Had his Lordship been verily persuaded that*



that there *could be*, and *was*, in the Church an Authority which is not absolute, it would have been natural for him to have said so ; for his Lordship I presume is not yet arrived to such a Fondness of singularity, as to affect to be thought more *Heterodox* than he really is, and therefore it must be supposed, that he would have taken the most effectual Method he possibly could, to have removed the Imputation he lay under , of being an Enemy to *all* Authority ; had he not been conscious to himself, that he really deserved it. I must farther add, that his Lordship upon this Supposition, ought *in justice to the Cause*, to have declared himself *in favour* of Authority. It is true, the Question between him and the *Committee*, was, whether he had *denied* all Authority to the Church or not, and consequently it would (I grant,) have been a sufficient answer to their Charge, to have proved that he had *denied no* Authority but *absolute* Authority. But had his Lordship no business with any but the *Committee* ? Or was the Skreening himself from *Censure*, the only thing he had to take care about ? Certainly it was a Duty incumbent upon him as a *Christian* and a Bishop, as well to endeavour by all possible means to take away that Scandal which had been given to multitudes of others by his, at least seemingly, strange Doctrines ; and I suppose no body needs to be informed, which would have been the most proper means in order to this end, to have told us *openly* and *positively*, that the Church *has some* Authority, and what that Authority is, or to answer only by *Negative Assertions*, which any one may safely do, and would indeed naturally chuse to do, who owns *no* Authority, and has a Mind to deal with more *Prudence* than *Sincerity*. I cannot in the least doubt, but his Lordship was thoroughly sensible of all this ; and therefore I cannot but look upon this *Reservedness*, as a tacit Confession of the thing laid to his Charge ; and I am under very strong Apprehensions, that whenever the *Committee* shall think fit to *fix this Point* of Church-Authority, his Lordship will, if occasion serves, make use of that

*Liberty* which he says he is under, of *declaring for it*, after another sort of manner, than that in which he now seems willing the World should believe, he would declare himself.

But to do his Lordship justice, he has not all together dissembled the matter. For we have here and there (where one would not readily expect, and must look narrowly, to find them) a Passage or two dropt, which are as full against *all Authority* as possible. At p. 337, he declares under the Person of an *Honest Man*, and true *Protestant*, that he *Could not have been of this Church*, (i. e. of the Church of England) *if the Decisions of Human Authority properly so called, could have claimed the Regard of Christians*. At p. 312. he lays about him most vehemently against *all Authority*, as the *greatest and most irreconcilable Enemy to Truth*, that *this World ever yet found out, since it was in Being*. Amongst the many *Mischiefs* laid to its Charge, (which by the way, have arisen not barely from *Authority*, but from the *abuse of Authority*, or rather not from *Authority at all*, but from unjust and tyrannical *Usurpations* cover'd over, and Sanctified by the *name of Authority*; amongst the many evils I say, wherewith *Human Authority in Religion* stands charged) this is one, viz. That it is an *Enemy to all Reformation*, and that it *contests with the Church of England the Foundation upon which it stands*. And this it seems, will forever, and everywhere be the effect, whether it be exercised in a greater degree, or in a less; for he says, that the *calling in the Assistance of mere Authority, even against trifles in Religion, will by insensible degrees, come to the very same issue that it has been ever hitherto seen to end in*. So that it seems his Lordship is not for calling in the Assistance of Authority in any Case where Religion is concerned; nor would he have any regard paid to the Decisions of *Human Authority properly so called*, and that because if any regard be paid to such Decisions, it must destroy the very Foundation upon which the Church of England stands! He that will not accept



accept of this as a plain Declaration against all Church Authority, let him trust; but I fancy, had his Lordship placed these Passages in the same View with those wherein he has pretended to excuse himself, by saying that he had denied *no* Authority but *absolute* Authority, there would have been very few Readers so dim Sighted, as not immediately to have discovered the Grossness of the Fallacy.

To proceed now from Generals to Particulars. There are (as I have already shewn) but *two* Instances of Authority claimed by the Church of *England*. The one is a Right to make Laws in indifferent Matters relating to Religion and the Worship of God. The other a Right to judge Offenders, and to exclude them from her Society. And both these his Lordship has, I think, given us very plain Proofs that he disowns. For,

1. As to the Power of *Legislation*, he says expressly that he (a) *knows of NO Church Authority to OBLIGE ANY Christians to EXTERNAL COMMUNION*, i. e. he knows of *no Power that any in the Church can of Right have over others to oblige them to any one particular external Manner of religious Worship*. Now 'tis certain, I think, that if there be not in the Church a Power which shall oblige *some* Christians to *some* certain external Manner of religious Worship, the Church can have no Right to make Laws relating to religious Worship. For a Right of making Laws on the one hand there can never be, where an *Obligation* to obey those Laws on the other can never follow. What his Lordship presently adds, that there is not *any thing to determine Men* (to external Communion) *but their own Consciences, after the best use of their own Faculties*, I was at first much puzzled to understand. For this in some Sense is true, and withal very

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(a) Answ. to the Repres. Chap. 1. Sect. 22. p. 112.

consistent with supposing a Power in others to oblige to external Communion. For upon Supposition that Christ hath vested any Men in the Church with this Power, it is my own *Conscience* or *Judgment* that must determine me whether those who take upon themselves to impose upon me Terms of Communion, are *those Persons*. Again, seeing this Power of imposing Terms of Communion is limited to *indifferent Matters*, it is my own *Conscience* or *Judgment* also that must determine me whether the Terms imposed by them be lawful or not. So that you see I am all this while determined to external Communion *wholly* by my own *Conscience*, that is, it is my own *Judgment* alone which informs me, amidst the Variety of external Methods of religious Worship, which of them I am *obliged* to follow. But seeing his Lordship had so fully declared against *all* Church Authority to *OBLIGE* others to external Communion in the former part of the Sentence, I soon began to suspect that something very different from this must be meant by *the latter*. And that which most readily offer'd it self to me upon this Occasion is this, *viz.* that his Lordship, by saying that Men are to be determined to external Communion *wholly* by *their own Consciences*, would give us to understand, that Christians are at liberty, *without any manner of Regard* had to the *Injunctions* of their *Spiritual Governors*, to join themselves to *any* Communion that they themselves shall most approve of, and that even tho' the *Terms* of Communion imposed by them may *lawfully* be complied with. I was much confirmed in this Suspicion upon recollecting an Observation of his Lordship upon the 20th *Article* of our Church, which his Lordship hath so explained as to set *all* Christians upon an equal Foot, and to take away *all* Authority in one above another to fix and determine the external Manner of religious Worship. The Article declares that *the Church hath Power to decree Rites or Ce-*

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remories, and Authority in Controversies of Faith. These Words his Lordship (b) begs may be interpreted consistently with the stated and constant Professions of the Reformers, so as not to destroy the Reformation, nor the main Design of those who drew it up. A very reasonable and necessary Rule of Interpretation without doubt! And to shew you how religiously he himself was resolved to observe it, what does he do? why he goes on forthwith to interpret them in a manner utterly inconsistent both with the Design, the Professions, and Practice of the Reformers! Let it, says he, be remembered, that **THE CHURCH** having before been defined to be "a Congregation of faithful Men (that is, "Believers) in which the pure Word of God is "preached, &c." — *Whatever is affirmed of THE CHURCH, or THE AUTHORITY of the CHURCH, must be supposed to be affirmed NOT OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSONS, but of the WHOLE CONGREGATION, which is declared to be THE CHURCH.* Must it so, my Lord? Why then since it is affirmed of the Church *that it hath Power to decree Rites and Ceremonies*, the Meaning of this must be supposed to be, *not that any particular Persons in the Church have a Power to decree Rites and Ceremonies, but that the whole Congregation has this Power.* Is not this now what I said, viz. that his Lordship hath taken away *all* Authority in one Christian above another to prescribe Laws for the external Manner of religious Worship? Can any thing be more plain, than that he allows a Liberty to *any* Number or Congregation of Christians to fix upon such Rites and Ceremonies by mutual Agreement, as they shall think fit? But if his Lordship must needs call in Advocates to support his Opinion, let him go to the *Independents*, and not pretend to shelter himself un-

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(b) Ibid. Sect. 16. p. 84, 85.

der the Venerable Names of our *Reformers*, which is an Injury to them, and to the Truth at the same time. The whole Body of these Articles (as the Title of them specifies ) was set forth in order to the avoiding Diversities of Opinions, and for the establishing of Consent touching true Religion. The 20th Article in particular was manifestly intended to inform the People of the Authority of their lawful Governors to prescribe to them Rites and Ceremonies, hereby to prevent that Confusion which must necessarily have arisen, if every Man had been left absolutely to his own Liberty in this Case, and to establish throughout the whole Nation one regular and uniform Manner of religious Worship. This Article therefore is so far from teaching that particular Persons in the Church have not Power to decree Rites and Ceremonies, that the plain and necessary Construction of it is, that *they have*. If his Lordship will persist to maintain the contrary, I must desire him to give me the Sense of that part of the 34th Article, wherein it is declared, that *whoever thro' his PRIVATE JUDGMENT willingly and purposely doth openly break the Traditions and Ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the Word of God, ought to be rebuked as he that offendeth against the common Order of the Church*. I must also desire him to inform me what sort of Authority that must be which all Christians have in common one with another, and likewise upon what Foot the Bishops and Clergy of this Nation went when they settled an Ecclesiastical Government among us, and did themselves prescribe Rites and Ceremonies to the People. — But I perceive plainly that his Lordship's Notions are to be set up at any Rate, and neither Articles nor Creeds, nor the Gospel it self, to be spared when they stand in his Way.

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By this time I suppose my Reader is fully satisfied, that I do not wrong his Lordship, when I say, that his Design in teaching that Men are to be determined to *External Communion* wholly by their own Consciences, was not to guard them *only* against an *absolute* Submission to *all* imposed *Terms* of *Communion*, but to set them loose from *all* manner of *Regard* to the *Injunctions* of their *Spiritual Governours*, as having *no Right* to settle the *External Modes* or *Circumstances* of religious *Worship*. And after this, I do not in the least wonder to find his Lordship every where treating *outward Order* and *Decency* in the *Worship* of *God*, with the utmost *Contempt*. (c) *Alas!* says he, *all this proceeds from our poor worldly Notions of Order and Decency—If all Christians do not say Prayers at the same particular Minute—If all do not fast—at the same time of the Year, and upon the same Day of the Week—If some Christians kneel when others stand, or stand when others kneel—All this, in all the infinite Variety of it, is called—a Breach of the Order of Christ's Church.* So that it seems, to suppose that the *Order of Christ's Church* does at all consist, in *Christians praying or fasting at the same time, or in their being uniform in the same Gesture of standing or kneeling in their religious Assemblies*, is a *poor worldly Notion of Order and Decency*, and as disagreeable to the *Will of God*, and of *Christ*, as the *World* it self is from which it is taken. These are his own Words—But it would be endless to remark upon every Particular. Read over the whole *Section*, and then see if you can any where find a more bitter (tho' fly) *Invective* against *Rites and Ceremonies* in *Religion*, in the *Writings* of the most rigid *Dissenter*. One thing however I must beg leave to take notice of, which is, that that famous Text of *St. Paul*, *1 Cor. 14. 40.*

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(c) Chap. 3. Sect. 3. p. 282.

which has ever been hitherto interpreted as commanding outward Order and Decency, his Lordship has treated after the same manner that he has treated the XXth Article of our Church, *i. e.* he has endeavoured to explain it away. (d) St. Paul, says he, indeed speaks of Decency and Order in Assemblies of Christians; but in what Points — it is worth while to consider. He exhorts Christians in their Congregations, not to interrupt one another in their Preaching or Prophesying, but to speak one after another, without which Restraint upon themselves, one End of their assembling together would be wholly frustrated. Very true: But is this all? Was it the Intention of the Apostle to recommend Decency in no other Point but this, or in some others of the like sort, where the want of Decency would wholly destroy some one or other main End of religious Assemblies? Why, so it seems his Lordship would have us believe; for he says that this is *THE Point to which he (the Apostle) applied his Rule.* But his Lordship very well knows, that it was but two Chapters before, that the Apostle had given Directions that Men should pray (in the Publick Congregation) with their Heads uncovered, and Women on the contrary, with their Heads covered; and that in this very Chapter he forbids Women to speak in the Church; neither of which Circumstances (the former especially) can be necessary towards the preserving any one End of religious Assemblies. All these things having been distinctly noted, the Apostle concludes his Discourse by laying down a general Rule, that *ALL THINGS should be done decently and in order.* Now tho' I am not one of those who will appeal to this Direction of St. Paul, to argue for Submission to *EVERY THING* order'd by frail Men for the Decency, Beauty, or outward Pomp of Circumstances, rela-

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(d) Ibid. p. 290.



ing to the Manner or Form of worshipping God; yet I will venture at the Hazzard of being counted weak, to infer from hence, that in what Points soever the Rules of Order and Decency can take Place, (and what Points are there where they cannot?) there Order and Decency is to be preserved. That the Governours of the Church, (frail as they are) are the proper Judges of what is orderly and decent in God's Worship; and that therefore Submission to their Injunctions ought to be urged, and that too, in such a manner, as not to leave it to Men's own Judgments and Consciences, if by leaving it to Men's Judgments and Consciences, his Lordship means (as I suppose he does) leaving Men absolutely at Liberty whether they will comply with them or not, without having any Regard to their Authority, or to the Lawfulness or Unlawfulness of what they command. Nor am I at all moved with what his Lordship is pleased farther to alledge (on purpose to weaken the Force of this Text) viz. That the Apostle does not speak of this Decency and Order, which was really necessary in their Assemblies, in the manner in which he speaks of Righteousness and Holiness, and all the Fruits of the Spirit; nor thunder out Excommunications or Denunciations of God's Eternal Wrath against any who should transgress in this Point. For tho' 'tis true, that Matters of Order and Decency are of a Kind much inferior to Moral Duties, I have not yet so learned Christ, as to think any one Divine Precept to be beneath my Notice; and therefore let Rites and Ceremonies in Religion be of never so little Importance in themselves, yet if they be enjoined me in Virtue of a general Rule laid down in the Gospel, I shall (without looking for any particular Denunciation of God's Wrath) think it my Duty to comply with them, as knowing that those who out of a perverse and obstinate Spirit do refuse to comply with them, and thereby disturb the Peace of Christ's Church, are subject to all those general Denunciations, which lye against those who break his Commandments.

But it is not my Business at this time to enlarge upon the Duty of *Inferiors* in the Church, to submit to their *Superiors* in such Points. What I produced these Passages for, was principally to show, that so great is his Lordship's Zeal against the Necessity of *outward Order and Decency*, that he could not forbear to pervert one of the plainest Texts in the whole *Bible*, and that for no other Reason than because it speaks in Favour of it. The Name of *outward Uniformity* I perceive is become his Lordship's peculiar Aversion, and that to so great a Degree, that even whilst he seems to speak well of it, he most bitterly reviles it. *All that Uniformity in the different Congregations of the same Land, which is the Effect of a willing Choice, and the Result of Judgment and Conscience, I shall ever esteem* — Esteem? How? Why, to as high a Degree as it can claim. And how high this is, you may judge by the Reason his Lordship has been pleased to give us why he esteems it, which is indeed very extraordinary, and deserves your especial Notice. It is then, *because whilst it is so procur'd, it can never either injure Civil Society, or destroy good Learning and true Philosophy!* That is to say, his Lordship esteems *outward Uniformity* because it does no Hurt! I should have been glad he would have told us of any Good it does, and then I would have believed him to have been sincere in what he professes. But as it is, I can look upon this *seeming Commendation of outward Uniformity*, no otherwise than as a good genteel way of abusing it. For I can scarce believe his Lordship to be of so easy a Disposition, as to place any part of his *Esteem* upon things, which according to his own Account of them, are worth even just nothing at all. If it be considered farther, that all this is spoken of such an *Uniformity* as is the *Effect of a willing Choice, and the Result of Judgment*

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*and Conscience* (which Language, by this time, I suppose, you may be able to understand) you may from hence easily guess what he thinks of an *Uniformity* procured by, and maintained in Obedience to *Human Authority*. But there is no room for Conjectures in the Case. His Lordship tells us plainly a very few Lines after, that to *insist upon these* (i. e. outward *Order and Decency*) by *Virtue of mere Authority in some*, is—contrary to the professed *Design and Declaration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ*. All Authority is mere Authority; and I should desire no stronger Proof that *Christ* hath given to none Authority to make Laws relating to *Order and Decency*, if it were true, that to *insist upon Order and Decency by Virtue of Authority in any*, were contrary to the *Design and Declarations of the Gospel*.

And now after such plain *Declarations* as these against all *Humane Authority*, even in *indifferent Matters*; and so many good Words bestowed upon *Rites and Ceremonies* appointed for *Order and Decency* in the *Worship of God*; I am no longer at a Loss to know, what his Lordship's Notions both of *Uniformity and Conformity* are. And I think, I see very plainly, what that *Gaudy Figure dressed out by modern Fancy and Imagination* is, which gives his Lordship so much Offence, and which (as he insinuates) is now mistaken for the only true, *Original Church of England*.

2. We are now come to the other Instance of Authority, claimed by the *Church of England*, viz. The Authority of *judging and censuring Offenders*. As to which, that which his Lordship has been pleased to declare for, is (as you have seen in the foregoing Chapter) a *Right in all Christians to see open Wickedness; and to judge wilful Sin to be contrary to Christ's Laws, and the notorious Sinner unworthy of being acknowledged by them as a Brother.*

That is, (as his Lordship expresses himself a little before) he declares, that (e) every Man will judge him to be a Murderer, who takes away his Neighbours Life unjustly; and him to be an uncharitable Man, who never does an Act of Charity; and every Christian has a Right to shew his Sense of these open Sins. All this his Lordship, I thank him, is pleased to own. But that this is not that Right of judging which is claimed by the Church of England, is manifest. For as his Lordship confesses, and Reason tells us, this judging is not at all Authoritative, either so as to be peculiarly lodged in any one part of Christians over another, or so as at all to affect the Salvation of the Person thus judged, and his Condition as to the Favour of God. His Lordship therefore here owns judging, but not an Authority of judging. But the judging I am now speaking of as claimed by the Church of<sup>n</sup> England, is an Authority of judging, i. e. it is a Power supposed to be lodged in some Christians over others, to judge of their Behaviour, and to pass Sentence upon them decisively; not indeed so as to determine the Condition of those others, with respect to the Favour of God, but so as to determine their Conditions with respect to external Communion, as has before been explained. The Question being thus stated, we must next see what his Lordship's Opinion is, concerning such an Authority as this, and tho' he has not declared himself so plainly upon this Point, as he has upon the former, yet he has I think, given us sufficient Reason to believe, that he owns no such Authority. For,

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(e) Chap. 1. Sect. 7. p. 39.



1. His Lordship *designedly* endeavours to conceal his Opinion as to this Particular. This you have already seen in part, and may more fully be convinced of by what he says p. 47. *IF to deny all such visible Human Authority in judging, as can affect the Salvation of Men — be to leave the Church without any visible Human Authority to judge — I confess I have done it. — But if THEY hold any Authority besides this, or if THEY maintain that there may be Authority or Right to judge — in quite another Sense — then THEY cannot THEMSELVES conceive the Passages cited by them to tend to subvert ALL Government and Discipline in the Church of Christ.* You see here again that his Lordship puts the Issue of the Debate *wholly* upon what *THEY*, the Committee, will affirm concerning the *Authority of judging*. But why so? It may reasonably be demanded of his Lordship to give an Account of this Part of his Conduct. The only Account that I am able to give of it is, that he owns *NO Authority of judging* either in the Sense in which alone he pretends to have denied it, or *any other*, and that therefore he could not honestly have declared his Opinion without confessing the Thing laid to his Charge. I am the more confirmed in this by the Manner wherein he has managed this Part of the Debate against Dr. Sherlock. The Dean had said that *the CHURCH has a Right to judge of the Behaviour of Christians with respect to the Laws of Christ*, manifestly meaning thereby that the Church hath *Authority to determine the Condition of her Members with respect to external Communion*. In Answer to this the Bishop supposes him, against common Sense and Reason, to be contending for a sort of *judging* which is *not authoritative*, and then tells him that he contradicts nothing which he has affirmed. And let any one judge whether this altering

ing the State of the Question could proceed from any other Cause but the utmost Unwillingness to declare his Opinion. And what could be the Cause of this Unwillingness, but an inward Conviction that he owned *no such Authority* as Dr. Sherlock was contending for in Opposition to him?

2. The Case of the incestuous *Corinthian* as determined by St. Paul, which has ever been thought a decisive Argument for *such an Authority* as I am now speaking of, his Lordship (after his usual manner) has taken some Pains to shew to be nothing to the Purpose. (f) *I question*, says he, *whether any thing can certainly be argued from the Proceedings of St. Paul and the Corinthian Church in this Case (i. e. in the Case of the incestuous Person) but where all Circumstances are parallel — nor do I know of any sort of Excommunication ordinarily practised either in this or any other Churches which — can be justified by it.* Judge here again how well affected that Man must be to a Cause, who will endeavour, and that without any manner of Occasion given him, to smother the most considerable Evidence it has on its side. I say *the most considerable Evidence*, for I shall still beg Leave to call this Instance *an Evidence on the side of Excommunication*, in spite of all his Lordship's Cavillings against it. *An Apostle directing, the whole Congregation joining, and a Bodily Punishment as a present miraculous Effect of the Sentence consequent upon it, cannot*, says he, *be a Justification of — the ordinary Discipline of any Church.* But why so? why, for this worthy reason, *viz. because no Case can now happen which shall agree with this in every Circumstance.* That is to say, because, for Instance, there is not an

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(f) Ibid. p. 32.



Apostle *now alive* to direct *who* shall be excommunicated, and because a *present miraculous Effect* does not follow the Sentence of Excommunication, therefore Excommunication cannot be justified by this Instance! Why did not his Lordship proceed a little further, and say, that the Person to be excommunicated was *incestuous*, and the Persons directed to excommunicate him were *Corinthians*, and plead from hence that this Instance can justify Excommunication in *no other Case* but this, and that *no where* but at *Corinth*? But does his Lordship see any Consequences in this way of arguing? if he does, I must beseech him never more to pretend to justify *any thing* at all by the Practices of the Apostles; for an Apostle is not *now alive* to direct in one Case any more than in another, and consequently this *first* Objection is equally strong against *any* Inference of this Kind drawn from their Example. The *last* Objection relates only to the *Effect* of Excommunication, which, as his Lordship has observed, was a *present Bodily Punishment miraculously* inflicted upon the Offender; but that any Argument should possibly lie, from the *want* of such an *Effect* now, against Excommunication *it self*, is, I presume, a Secret reserved peculiarly for his Lordship's Discovery. And whereas his Lordship has mention'd a *third Circumstance*, *viz.* that of *the whole Congregation joining*, I answer, that this Circumstance ever may concur, and always does concur with Excommunication, as practised in all Churches, so far as it did concur in the Case of the *Corinthian Church* now before us. For the whole Congregation joined in the Excommunication no otherwise than as *Witnesses* to the Sentence passed, which Custom ever has been, and is every where observed unto this Day. That a *formal Sentence* was passed upon the *incestuous Person*, his Lordship owns, and is clear from the History *it self*;

self; for it was when they were gathered together, that he was to be *delivered unto Satan*. Now that this Sentence was to be passed by the Governours of that Church, or by some Body or other appointed by them, and not by the whole Congregation, is a Point too plain of it self to need to be insisted upon.

The Truth of the Matter, as I take it, lies here. The Practice of the Apostles is a sufficient Justification of a like Practice in the Church after them, in all Cases where the reason of that Practice is the same, and where there is nothing in the Nature of the Thing which makes the *immediate* Direction of an Apostle to become necessary. Here we have an Instance of an Apostle directing the Governours of a particular Church to pronounce a formal Sentence of Excommunication against a notorious Offender, by which he should be adjudged as cut off from the Society or Fellowship of Christians. The reason of this Practice is manifestly always the same. The Nature of the Case is such as does by no means require the immediate Direction of an Apostle, even in the Opinion of this Apostle himself. For as I understand the Second Verse of this Chapter, the Apostle blames them that the *wicked Person* was not *already taken away from among them*. Besides, what can there be in the Nature of the Thing that necessarily requires the Direction of an Apostle? That a Man should be a *proper Subject* of Excommunication, *i. e.* that he should *deserve to be* excommunicated, it is enough that he has *openly violated* the Laws of the Gospel, and of this surely any Man may judge as well as an Apostle. Thus stands the Case: And now whether this Instance will not *sufficiently justify the ordinary Discipline of the Church* with respect to Offenders, I leave any reasonable and unprejudiced Man to consider. — But to return from this Digression. I observe,

3. That



3. That his Lordship, if I understand him rightly, has taught several Things inconsistent with this *Authority of Judging* which I am now contending for. To make you sensible of which, I must premise, that if an Authority of Judging be, as we suppose, peculiarly lodged in *some Christians over others*, i. e. in the *Governours* of the Church, it follows plainly that none of the *inferior Clergy* ought to refuse to any Christian the usual *Tokens of Church Communion*, in Opposition to the *Judgment and Direction* of their *Superiors*; and that no *private Christian* ought to treat or use another as excommunicate, who is not by the *Governours* of the Church first declared to be so. Because to allow of the contrary Practice, is to put the *Power of Judging* into every *Christian's Hands*; upon which Supposition it must cease in any respect to be *authoritative*. And yet this Practice his Lordship seems plainly to contend for. For he says, he (g) does not doubt but the *Nature and Usefulness of the thing is a sufficient Justification of ANY Christians, who set a Mark upon the open Immorality and Wickedness of any professed Christians, EVEN BY REFUSING TO THEM THE PECULIAR TOKENS AND MARKS of Christian Communion, AS WELL AS by avoiding their Company.* The peculiar Tokens or Marks of Church Communion, considered as distinct from *keeping Company*, are the joining together in all outward *Acts of religious Worship*, and more especially in the Use of the *holy Sacrament*. To refuse to another these Tokens, must signify either, 1<sup>st</sup>, The refusing to administer to another these Tokens: Or, 2<sup>dly</sup>, The refusing to join with him in the participation of these Tokens, when administered by the Hands of o-

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(g) Ibid. p. 39.

thers. His Lordship can hardly be understood to speak in the *former* Sense, because he very well knows that it is not *the Office* of every Christian to administer the Tokens of Church Communion. And in the *latter* Sense his Meaning must be, that it is lawful for every private Christian to refuse to join in religious Worship with an open Sinner, whether he be declared excommunicate or not. Which Assertion, as it effectually destroys all *Authority* of judging in the Church of Christ, so it does no less effectually justify one Plea of the *Dissenters* for separating from our Communion, which all Divines, and some even among the *Dissenters* themselves, have declared to be unjustifiable.

Again, his Lordship declares, that *(h)* a Right to judge that an open Sinner——is not worthy of being owned as one of the Christian Society, he has never denied to every Christian, much less to those whose Office it is to administer holy things, and who therefore must judge **FORTHEMSELVES**, that it is not proper for them to acknowledge as Christians those who openly and notoriously live in a Violation of the Moral Laws of Christ. This Sentence is very obscurely worded, whether with Design or not I cannot tell. But the meaning of it, must be this. That every Clergyman is to be his own Judge what Persons it is proper for him to admit to the holy Communion, and what not. This is plain, because he applies this particularly to the Case of administering the Sacrament, in the very next Words. This Assertion therefore leaves the Power of Excommunication equally in all Clergymen, and in all Christians; which, how contrary it is to the Usage of all Churches, and particularly to the Usage of the

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(h) Ibid. Sect. 9. p. 50.



Church of England, no one, I suppose, needs to be informed. We have a *Rubrick* indeed which authorizes every *Curate* to repel from the holy Communion all open and notorious evil Livers, all who have done Wrong to their Neighbours, and all betwixt whom he perceiveth Malice and hatred to reign. But this Authority reaches no farther than to one single Act of Refusal; for the same *Rubrick* puts in this *Proviso*, that every *Minister* so repelling any——shall be obliged to give an Account of the same to the Ordinary within Fourteen Days. Give an Account to the Ordinary? For what End? Why (says *Can. 27.*) to signify unto him the Cause of his refusing him, and therein (for the future) to obey his Order and Direction. So then, according to the Constitutions of our Church, the Ordinary, and not the *Curate*, is to judge finally and decisively who is to be admitted to the holy Communion, and who not. How his Lordship will reconcile his Doctrine with this, and with that Authority which he is bound as a *Bishop* to exercise in this Case, I shall leave him to make out.

Thus I have shewn that his Lordship hath even now denied to the Church all Authority in every Instance of it. And I now put it to the *Bishop's* Conscience, whether it would not have been more becoming his Character, instead of endeavouring to evade the Charge of the Committee upon this Head, by pretending that he had denied no Authority but absolute Authority, to have spoke out, and said, that he owns no Authority. But however the World has hitherto been satisfied with such Pretensions, I presume it will now be expected that he should declare himself freely and openly. And if still he will say, that the Church has Authority; that there is a Power in some over others to prescribe Laws for Order and Decency in indifferent Matters in Religion, and to judge and

determine the Condition of others with respect to external Communion, I shall, notwithstanding all the Discouragements I have met with, admit of his solemn Declaration against every thing I have said, and only be sorry that he has given me so much occasion to mistake his Meaning. But if he shall declare the contrary, as this will convince the World that what I have now offered is not vain Suspicion, so I may venture to promise his Lordship, that he will find those who have both Abilities and Honesty enough to oppose him.







